

The Cornflower

and other

Poems



Jean
Blewett.

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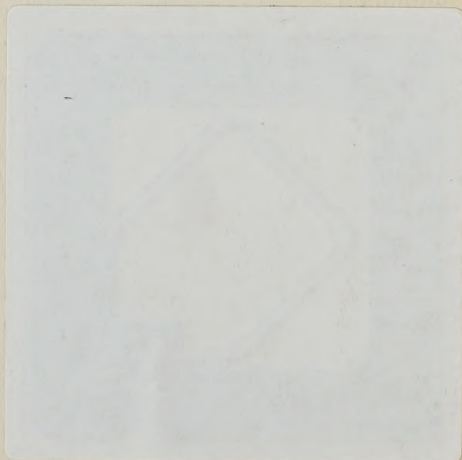
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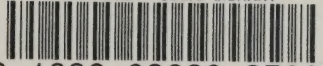
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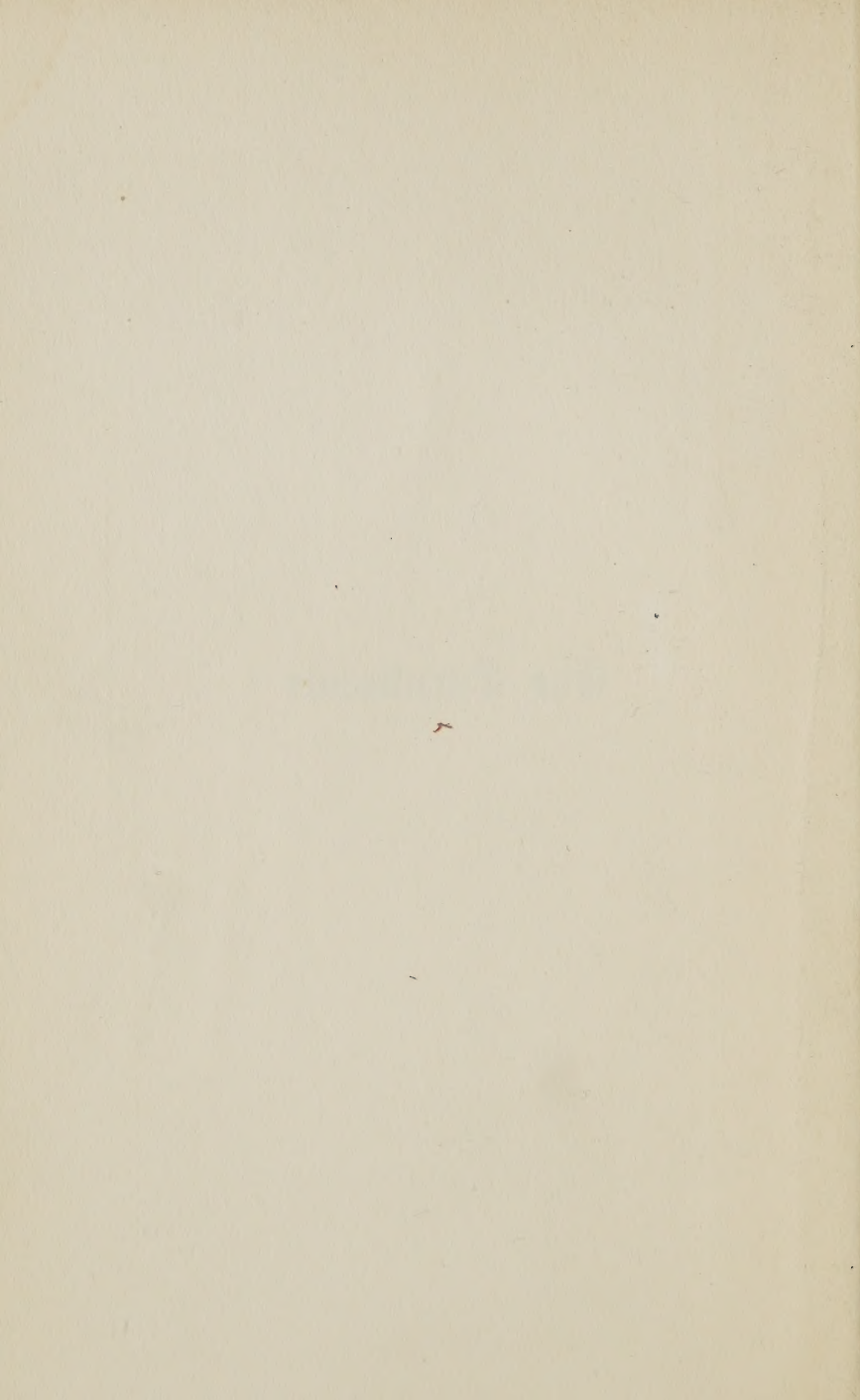


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The Cornflower



The Cornflower and Other Poems

BY
JEAN BLEWETT

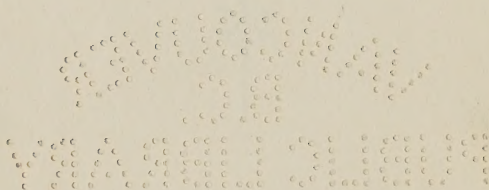
Author of "Heart Songs,"
etc.

SECOND EDITION



TORONTO
WILLIAM BRIGGS
1907

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Entered according to Act of the
Parliament of Canada, in the year
one thousand nine hundred and six,
by JEAN BLEWETT, at the depart-
ment of Agriculture.

TO

Lillian Massery Treble

*A woman with a heart of gold
I heard her called before I knew
How noble was that heart and true,
How full of tenderness untold.*

*Her sympathies both broad and sure,
Her one desire to do the right—
Clear visioned from the inner light
God gives to souls unworldly, pure.*

*A heart of gold that loves and gives,
God's almoner from day to day,
Of her there is but this to say:
The world is better that she lives.*

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Narrative Poems

THE CORNFLOWER.

THE day she came we were planting corn,
 The west eighty-acre field,—
 These prairie farms are great for size,
 And they're sometimes great for yield.

“ The new school-ma'am is up to the house,”
 The chore-boy called out to me;
 I went in wishing anyone else
 Had been put in chief trustee.

I was to question that girl, you see,
 Of the things she ought to know;
 As for these same things, I knew right well
 I'd forgot them long ago.

I hadn't kept track of women's ways,
 'Bout all I knew of the sex;
 Was that they were mighty hard to please,
 And easy enough to vex.

My sister Mary, who ruled my house—
And me—with an iron hand,
Was all the woman I knew real well—
Her I didn't understand.

But I'd no call to grumble at fate,
Fifty, well off, and unwed;
Young as a lad in spite of the dust
Old Time had thrown on my head.

I engaged the school-ma'am on the spot,
And the reason, I surmise,
Was this, she didn't giggle or blush,
But looked me fair in the eyes.

The planting over, why, every lad
In a space of ten good mile
Was off for the school with a sudden zeal
That made all us old folks smile.

How she took to our wide prairie
After towns with narrow streets!
To watch that west eighty-acre field
Was one of her queer conceits.

"You planted that corn the day I came,"
She said, "and I love to go
And watch the sun-mother kiss and coax
Each slim green stalk to grow."

I called her "Cornflower" when she took
To wearing 'em in her belt.
The young chaps were all in love with her—
And I knew just how they felt.

Oh, I tell you that was a summer,
Such sunshine, such dew, such rain;
Never saw crops grow so in my life—
Don't expect I will again.

To watch that west eighty-acre field,
When the fall came clear and cold,
Was something like a sermon to me—
Made me think of streets of gold.

But about that time the new school-ma'am
Had words with the first trustee;
A scholar had taken the fever
And she was for blaming *me*.

That schoolhouse should be raised from the ground—
Grave reason there for alarm;
A new coat of plaster be put on
That the children be kept warm.

A well—a good one—should take the place
Of the deathtrap that was there.
"This should all be done at once," she said.
Cost five hundred dollars clear!

I told her I couldn't think of it,
But, when all my work was through,
If the taxes came in middling good,
I would see what I could do.

"Remember you're only the steward,"
She said, "of your acres broad,
And that the cry of a little child
Goes straight to the ears of God."

I remarked that it wasn't her place
To dictate to the trustee,
And Cornflower lifted her eyes of blue
And *looked* what she thought of me.

That night as we came up from the fields,
And talked of the threatened frost,
The chore-boy called out, half pleased, half scared:
"The school-ma'am's got herself lost."

I turned me about and spoke no word;
I'd find her and let her see
I held no spite 'gainst a wayward girl
For lecturing a trustee.

For I knew before I found the knot
Of ribbon that she had worn,
That somehow Betty had lost her way
In the forest of ripened corn.

The sun went down and left the world
Beautiful, happy and good;
True, the girl and myself had quarrelled,
But when I found her and stood

With silver stars mistily shining
Through the deep blue of the skies,
Heard somebody sob like a baby,
Saw tears in somebody's eyes,

Why, I just whispered, "Betty, Betty,"
Then whispered "Betty" some more;
Not another word did I utter—
I'll stick to this o'er and o'er.

You needn't ask me to explain, friends,
I don't know how 'twas myself,
That first "Betty" said I was ashamed
Of my greedy love of pelf.

The second one told her I'd be glad
To raise the old schoolhouse up,
And be in haste to put down a well,
With a pump and drinking cup.

The third "Betty" told her I would act
A higher and nobler part;
The fourth "Betty" told her I loved her—
Loved her with all my heart.

“ Ah, well! there’s no fool like an old fool,”
Was what sister Mary said;
“ No fool in the world like an old fool,
You’ll find that out, brother Ned.”

“ Mary,” I said, “ there’s a better thing
Than land, or dollar, or dime;
If being in love is being a fool
Here’s one till the end of time.”

I should think so, I’m a married man
Four years come this Christmastide,
And autumn now is flinging her gold
O’er the fields on every side.

My wife called out as I drove the cows
To the pasture-field this morn,
“ Ned, please go look for your son and heir,
He toddled off in the corn.”

And sister Mary must make a joke;
“ Go find him at once,” said she,
“ You know to get lost in a field of corn
Runs in that boy’s family.”

THE QUARREL.

WHEN Mary found fault with me that day the trouble
was well begun.

No man likes being found fault with, no man really
thinks it fun

To have a wisp of a woman, in a most obnoxious way,
Allude to his temper as beastly, and remark that day
by day

He proves himself so careless, so lacking in love, so
mean,

Then add, with an air convincing, she wishes she'd
never seen

A person who thinks so little of breaking a woman's
heart,

And since he is—well, what he is—'tis better that
they should part.

Now, no man enjoys this performance—he has his
faults, well and good,

He doesn't want to hear them named—this ought to
be understood.

Mary was aggravating, and all because I'd forgot
To bring some flowers I'd promised—as though it
mattered a lot;
But that's the way with a woman, your big sins she
may forgive,
But little things, not worth mention, you hear of as
long as you live.

A few sweet peas and carnations to start a tempest,
forsooth!
For Mary got in a temper—I did the same, of a truth.
I said things that weren't gentle; she pretended not
to mind—
But answered back in a manner that left me away
behind.

It ended up in our saying good-bye for the rest
of our days,
Both vowing we'd be happier going our different
ways.
And I strode out in the garden where the trees were
pink and white,
Where bobolinks scolded sparrows, and robins, wild
with delight,
Chirped and called and fluttered in the blossoming
trees above,
Where Nature was busy teaching her lessons of joy
and love.

I made a bed of the soft, warm earth, stretched me
out in the sun.

Vext and weary, I fell asleep, and slept till the day
was done.

The voice of my brother waked me, crying, " Quickly
arise and come;

Bear up like a man, Heaven help you! Death has
suddenly entered your home!"

'Twas Mary, my own sweet Mary! The eyelashes slept
on her cheek,

The lips had a half-smile on them, as though they were
going to speak

Some of the old-time tender words, witty rejoinder or
jest,

Or ask the question they'd asked so oft, " Jim,
who do you love the best? "

But the small hands gave no pressure when I took
them in my own,

And bending down to kiss her face, I found it cold
as a stone.

And it came to me I could never—never, since Mary
was dead—

Say, " Dear one, I didn't mean them, the bitter words
that I said."

Never see the tears go from her sweet, dark eyes, and
the brightness take their place,

Never watch the joy and gladness come back to my
darling's face.

Not a fault could I remember—she'd been perfect all
her days,
With her sweetness and her laughter, her tender
womanly ways.
Dead—dead in her fresh young beauty—oh, I had an
anguished heart
At thought of the quarrel ending in our agreeing to
part!

When two people love each other, I'll tell you the
wisest way,
'Tis to think before speaking harshly, for there surely
will come a day
When one will sleep on so soundly that he or she
will not wake,
The other sit in the stillness and cry with a great
heart-break.
It is to ears all unheeding our tenderest words are
said—
The love that the living long for we waste it upon the
dead.
We say this life is so dreary, talk much of heaven, I
know,
But if we were good to each other we'd have our
heaven below.
“ Mary,” I whispered, “ my Mary, no flowers to you
I gave,
But I'll heap them on your coffin and plant them
over your grave.”

A bird sang sweetly and shrilly in the blossoms over-
head,

And I awoke, awoke, awoke—I'd *dreamed* that Mary
was dead!

I woke in the golden sunshine, the birds were singing
aloud.

There was no still form beside me, nor any coffin or
shroud,

But just a slip of a woman with her brown eyes full
of tears—

Oh, that blessed, blessed waking I've remembered
through all the years.

I told the story to Mary, who hasn't let me forget
That dream in the blossoming orchard— I hear of it
often yet.

If I neglect to bring flowers, it's: "Oh, you're going
to save

Your roses to heap on my coffin, your pansies to plant
on my grave?"

And if I lose my temper—a common weakness of
men—

The sweetest voice in the world says: "You'll have
to get dreaming again."

IN SUNFLOWER TIME.

IN the farmhouse kitchen were Nan and John,
With only the sunflowers looking on.

A farmhouse kitchen is scarce the place
For knight or lady of courtly grace,

But this is just an everyday pair
That hold the kitchen this morning fair.

A saucy, persistent thorn-tree limb
Had sacrificed a part of the brim

Of the youth's straw hat. His face was brown,
And his well-shaped forehead wore a frown.

His boots were splashed with mud and clay
From marshland pasture over the way,

Where alderbushes and spicewood grew,
And frogs croaked noisily all night through.

'Neath muslin curtains, snowy and thin,
The homely sunflowers nodded in.

Nan was a picture. Her muslin gown
Had maybe a bit old-fashioned grown,

But fitted the slender shape so well.
In its low-cut neck the soft lace fell.

Sleeves, it had none from the elbows down;
In length—well, you see, the maid had grown.

A labor of love her homely task—
To share it none need hope nor ask,

For Nan was washing each trace of dirt
From fluted bodice and ruffled skirt.

Now, few that will, and fewer that can,
Bend over a tub like pretty Nan.

The frail soap bubbles sailed high in air
As she drew each piece from frothy lair,

And rubbed with cruel yet tender hand
As only a woman could, understand.

Then wrung with twist of the wrist so strong,
Examined with care, shook well and long,

Flung in clear water to lie in state —
Each dainty piece met the same hard fate.

“ ’Tis done!” with a look of conscious pride
At the rinsing bucket deep and wide.

Wiping the suds from each rounded arm,
She turned to John with a smile so warm:

“ I’ve kept you waiting—excuse me, please,
The soapsuds ruin such goods as these.”

“ You’re over fond of finery, Nan,
Dresses and furbelows,” he began.

“ Maybe I am, of a truth,” she said.
Each sunflower nodded its yellow head.

“ Ned Brown’s growing rich”—John’s words
came slow—

“ That he loves you well you doubtless know.

“ My house and acres, I held them fast,
Was stubborn over them to the last,

“ For when my father was carried forth,
And men were asking ‘What was he worth?’

“ I saw them look and nod and smile
As they whispered together all the while,

“ ‘A fine old homestead, but mortgaged so,
A foolish thing for a man to do!’

“ I said, ‘ My father’s dead and gone,
But he’s left behind a strong-armed son.’

“ My heart was hot with a purpose set
To clear that mortgage, to pay that debt.

“ I’ve worked, heaven knows, like any slave,
I’ve learned the lesson of scrimp and save,

“ Kept a good horse, but dressed like a clown—
And I’ve not a dollar to call my own.

“ I’m beaten—well beaten ; yesterday
Everything went to Ned Brown from me.

“ My woods, my meadows, my tasselled corn,
The orchard planted when I was born,

“ The old rose garden my mother loved,
My chestnut mare—can’t help feeling moved,

“ For I’m a beggar, Nan, you see—
Don’t think me begging for sympathy.

“ The world is wide, I don’t care—much.
Thank God, health’s a thing the law can’t touch.

“ The happiest man I ever knew
Was born a beggar, and died one, too.”

Each sunflower, nodding its yellow head,
Listened to every word that was said,

As Nan in her slow and easy way,
In the farmhouse kitchen that summer day,

Set a great and weighty problem forth,
One that no scholar on this green earth

Has been able to solve since things began
With Adam—a lone and lonesome man.

Yet very coolly she set it forth:
“Tell me the truth, how much am *I* worth?”

The sunbeams kissing her golden hair,
Her cheeks, her round arms dimpled and bare,

Seemed stamping value of mighty wealth
On youth, and love, and the bloom of health.

John looked and looked till his eyes grew dim,
Then tilted the hat with worthless brim

To hide what he would not have her see—
“ You are worth the whole world, Nan,” said he.

“ Then you’re no beggar,” said sweet, bold Nan,
“ You’re the whole world richer than any man.”

A girl queen wearing a crown of gold
Set a precedent, the tale is told,

But no royal prince this world has seen
Ever felt so proud as John, I ween,

As he clasped her hands in new-born hope—
And never noticed they smelt of soap.

Only the sunflowers looking on,
So he kissed the maid—oh, foolish John!

As he went out through the garden gate
Ned Brown was coming to learn his fate.

He was riding John’s own chestnut mare,
But, somehow, John didn’t seem to care.

The two men met at top of the hill,
And eyed each other as rivals will.

Ned thought of the home he’d won from John,
“ Poor beggar!” he said, as he rode on.

John thought of all he had won from Ned,
“ You poor, poor beggar!” was what he said.

Why? Under the heavens clear and blue
Only our John and the sunflowers knew.

THE WOOING O' KATIE.

McLEOD of Dare called his son to him.
McLeod of Dare looked stern and grim,

For he was sending on mission grave
His son, and though he knew him brave

The old man trembled lest he should make
In heedless youth a grave mistake.

'Twas not for the country, nor for the king,
Nay, 'twas a more important thing

Than country, or clan, or feud, or strife,
The young man went to woo a wife.

He listened, did Neil, with scanty grace,
Haughty gloom on his handsome face,

While the old man told him where to go,
And what to say, and what to do.

“ The morrow ye'll go for a lang, lang stay
Wi' your rich uncle, Donald Gray.

“ He'll gie ye a welcome wairm and true,
And mate his only child wi' you.

“ She's weel worth winning, for in her hand
She hauds the deed o' a' his land.

“ She's far frae haun'some—a homely lass,
As you will see—but let that pass.”

“ Why should I wed a woman that's plain?
You didn't yourself.” McLeod was vain.

He smiled and he smirked, “ Ah, true, Neil, true,
But I was haun'somer nor you.

“ Juist coort this cousin, and never mind
Squint or freckle, since luve is blind—

“ Or ought tae be in sic case as this—
'Tis no a chance I'd hae ye miss.

“ Jane's na sae braw as her cousin Kate,
But 'tis wi' Jane I'd hae ye mate;

“ For Kate, poor lassie, she hasna land—
Her face is her fortune, understand.

“ Gie her guid day when ye chance tae meet,
But Jane, remember, your fain tae greet

“ Wi’ warmer words, and a gallant air.
Go, win a wife—and a warld o’ care!”

Neil listened closest to what was said
Of Kate, the poor but pretty maid.

And when he reached his good uncle’s place
’Twas Kate that in his eyes found grace,

The while Jane simpered with conscious pride,
As if to say: “Behold your bride!”

In this home he dwelt for many a day,
A favorite, he, of Donald Gray. -

They walked together over the hill,
Or through the valleys solemn and still,

And the old man showed him acres wide
That would be Jane’s dower as a bride,

Then spoke of the cousin, poor but fair,
Her eyes of blue and her golden hair.

“ She’ll hae na flocks, and she’ll hae na laund,
She’ll hae na fortune rich and graund,

“ But gin she stood in her scanty dress,
Would man o' mettle luvè her less ?”

The lad's heart warmed to the logic old.
What worth has land ? What worth has gold ?

Compared with the light in Katie's eyes,
What worth was aught beneath the skies ?

Jane courted briskly day by day,
If he walked out she walked his way.

Did he sit him down to rest awhile,
She looked his way with tender smile.

Did he try to get a word with Kate,
Jane was there like the hand of fate.

One day it chanced, as he rode to mill,
He met with Kate just under the hill.

Would she mount beside him, ride along ?
Yes, if he felt 'twould not be wrong.

He helped her up with a trembling arm ;
Surely the day is close and warm.

Whoa, mare ! steady ! there's no need for haste
With two soft arms about his waist.

Neil—shame on him!—pressed Kate's finger-tips,
Then turned about and pressed her lips.

All over the road the blossoms white
Scattered themselves in sheer delight.

A bird flew singing a tender rhyme
Of meadow, mate, and nesting time.

The world looked beautiful in the glow
That heaven flung on the hills below.

Ah me, if that ride could but last a week,
Her gold hair blowing against his cheek!

The road to the mill, says worldly wise—
Nay, nay, the road to Paradise!

Travel it once if you wish to know
Something of heaven here below.

Though your eyes grow dim, and locks grow
white,
You'll not forget this journey—quite.

But Neil must go to the old home place,
Meet his stern father face to face.

Altho' his cheek was a trifle pale,
Boldly enough he told his tale.

He would marry Kate—and Kate alone—
He could not love the other one.

Her eyes were crooked, her hair was red,
Freckles over her face were spread,

And the whole world held no lass for him
But Kate. Then laughed the old man grim.

“ Your mither, she was a stubborn lass,
Self-willed, handsome—but let that pass.

“ In a' oor battles 'twas she who won,
And Neil, you're juist your mither's son.

“ But I hae na lived these mony days
Wi'oot walking in wisdom's ways.

“ I saw your Kate, and like't her weel—
In luiks she's like your mither, Neil;

“ The same blue een, and the same gowd hair—
But no sae fair, Neil, no sae fair.

“ I tou'd your uncle to let Kate be
The lassie poor, o' low degree,

“ And gie ye at once to understand
'Twas Jane who owned baith flocks and land.

“ Why gie mysel’ sic a senseless task?
I wunner, lad, ye’ve hairt tae ask.

“ Gin ye was driven ye wouldna’ move,
Too stubborn to even fa’ in luv!

“ Like a’ the Campbells, ye’ll hae your way—
Your mither has hers every day.

“ ’Tis prood ye should be, upon my word,
Tak’ time to yoursel’ and thank the Lord

“ For plans that gat ye a bonny bride—
An’ heaps o’ wardly gear beside.”

Ah! thankful enough was Neil that day—
Joy flashed in his eager eyes of gray.

’Twas not for the land, not for the gold,
Not for the flocks that slept in fold,

Not for the wealth—the worldly gear—
But something wonderful, sweet and dear.

“ Thank heaven,” he cried, with a glow and
thrill,

“ Thank heaven for the day I rode to mill!”

THE OLD MAN'S VISIT.

JOE lives on the farm, and Sam lives in the city,
 I haven't a daughter at all—more's the pity,
 For girls, to my mind, are much nicer and neater;
 Not such workers as boys, but cuter and sweeter.
 Sam has prospered in town, has riches a-plenty,
 Big house, fine library—books written by Henty,
 And Kipling, and Cooper, and all those big writers—
 Swell pictures and busts of great heroes and fighters.
 His home is a fine one from cellar to garret,
 But not to my notion—in fact, I can't bear it.
 I'm not hard to please, but of all things provoking
 Is a woman around who sniffs when you're smoking.

Last springtime Sam said: “Now, Father, how is it
 I can't coax you oftener up on a visit?”
 I couldn't think up any plausible reason,
 So off I went with him to stop for a season.
 Sam said with a laugh as we stepped from the ferry,
 “You won't mind my wife; she's particular, very.”
 It wasn't like home, that house in the city,
 Our Sam took his fun at the club—more's the pity.

It is in his own house, when he has the leisure,
A man should find comfort and freedom and pleasure.
It wasn't so bad for me in the daytime,
Sam took me all over and made it a playtime;
But evenings were awful—we sat there so proper,
While Sam's wife, if nobody came in to stop her,
Read history to us, or, column by column,
A housekeeping journal, or other dry volume.
I used to wish someone would give me a prodding,
My eyes would go shut and head fall a-nodding.
She's an awful good housewife, nothing gets musty,
Or littered about, or untidy, or dusty;
But a little disorder never did fret me,
And these *perfect* women they always upset me.
I can stand her dusting, her shining, her poking,
But wilt like a leaf when she sniffs when I'm smoking.

I got so blamed homesick I couldn't be jolly;
I wanted our Joe, and his little wife, Molly,
My old corner at home, and all the old places;
I wanted the youngsters—who cared if their faces
Were smeared up a trifle? I didn't, a penny.
Molly tends to 'em, though she has so many.
I was tickled to death when I got a letter
From Joe, which ran: "Dear Dad, I think you had
better
Get back to the farm in pretty short order.
Molly's papered your room and put on a border;
The baby, she says, has two new teeth to show you—
If you don't hustle back the dear thing won't know
you.

She says to inform you that Bob, Sue, and Mary
Are good as can be, but your namesake's contrary,
Wants granddaddy's story, and granddaddy's ditty—
And granddaddy off on a trot to the city."

I packed my belongings. They tried to dissuade me—
Sam's wife said so proper: "I'm really afraid we
Have not succeeded in our entertaining."

"Oh, yes!" said I—some things won't stand much
explaining.

She really meant well, but of all things provoking
Is a woman so perfect she sniffs when you're smoking.

I was glad to get home; it made me quite silly
To hear the loud whinny of Starling and Billy;
And here was the farm with its orchards and meadows,
The big maple trees all throwing their shadows,
The stubble-fields yellow, the tall stacks of clover,
The wag of the stub of a tail on old Rover.

And here came dear Mary, her hat on her shoulder,
With Sue trying hard to catch her and hold her;
Here came Tommy and Joe, always foot in their
classes,

And Bob, with his features all crumbs and molasses,
Carrying a basin with fishworms and dirt in—

Oh, that scalawag, Bob, I'm morally certain
Is a chip of the old block—it just seemed to strike me
They'd named the boy rightly, for he was so like me—
All laughing and calling: "Here's grandpa to play
with!"

And Bob supplementing: "And sleep 'ith and *stay*
'ith!"

And then such a hugging, with Molly behind me,
The tears came so fast that they threatened to blind
me.

My heart overflowed with sorrow and pity
For the boy I had left back there in the city.
His lot is a hard one—indeed, I'm not joking—
He lives with a woman who sniffs when he's smoking.

The supper we had, sir, and when it was over
The walk round the homestead close followed by
Rover,

Who's most like a human. You'd fancy him saying:
"See those stacks? Oh, yes, we have finished the
haying!

That colt should be broken. Old friend, I'd just
mention

This farm stands in need of our closest attention."
And when, the lamp lighted, with Mary's beside me,
The boys at my feet, and Bob up astride me,
I felt like a king—I really can't write it—
Molly must take my pipe and fill it and light it,
Then plump herself down in her own little rocker
For a visit with me. Oh, she is a talker
Worth the listening to. The threshing was over,
Joe had got ten dollars a ton for the clover,
Deacon Hope had had a sharp tiff with the preacher
Over immersion, and the pretty school-teacher
Intended to marry—resigned her position.
Yes, most of the church folks had signed the petition
Against granting a license to Baker's saloon,
The Thanksgiving service would be coming on soon,

The neighbors were hearty, had every one missed me—
Right here Molly stood on her tip-toes and kissed me.
Sho! Sam's wife is handsome and cultured and
clever,

But she's not the woman that Molly is—never.
Molly's smile is so kind, and her hair is so glossy,
Her brown eyes look at you so sweet and so saucy!
Yes, Joe's richer than Sam, though Joe's but a farmer,
For his home atmosphere is brighter and warmer.
Sam has lots of money, there's no use denying;
Has made himself wealthy, and that without trying;
But what chance has a man—indeed, I'm not joking—
Who lives with a woman who sniffs when he's smoking!

JACK.

JACK's dead an' buried; it seems odd,
A deep hole covered up with sod
Lyin' out there on the hill,
An' Jack, as never could keep still,
A sleepin' in it. Jack could race,
And do it at a good old pace,
Could sing a song, an' laugh so hard
That I could hear him in our yard
When he was half a mile away.
Why, not another boy could play
Like him, or run, or jump so high,
Or swim, no matter how he'd try;
An' I can't get it through my head
At all, at all, that Jack is dead.

Jack's mother didn't use to be
So awful good to him and me,
For often when I'd go down there
On Saturdays, when it was fair,
To get him out to fish or skate,
She'd catch me hangin' round the gate

And look as cross as some old hen,
 An' tell me, "Go off home again.
 It's not the thing for boys," she'd say,
 "A hangin' round the creek all day;
 You go off home and do your task—
 No, Jack can't go, you needn't ask."
 And when he got in scrapes, why, she
 Would up and lay it on to me,
 An' wish I lived so far away
 Jack couldn't see me every day.

But last night when I'd done the chores
 It seemed so queer-like out of doors,
 I kept a listenin' all the while,
 An' looking down the street a mile;
 I couldn't bear to go inside,
 The house is lonesome since he died.
 The robber book we read by turns
 Is lyin' there—an' no boy learns
 All by himself, 'cause he can't tell
 How many words he'll miss or spell,
 Unless there's some one lookin' on
 To laugh at him when he gets done.

An' neighbor women's sure to come
 A visitin' a feller's home,
 An' talkin', when they look at me,
 'Bout how thick us two used to be,
 A stealin' off from school, an' such,
 An' askin' do I miss him much,

'Till I sneak off out doors—you see,
They just can't let a feller be!
Well, I walked down the road a bit.
Smith's dog came out. I throwed at it,
An', do you know, it never howled
Same as it always did, or growled;
It seemed to say, "Why, Jim's alone!
I wonder where's that other one?"

Afore I knew it I was down
'Way at the other end of town,
A hangin' round in the old way
For someone to come out and play.
There wasn't no one there to look,
So I slipped into our old nook.
I found his knife down in the grass
Where we'd been Zulus at the pass.
The can of bait, the hook and line
Were lyin' with the ball of twine,
An' "Jim," I seemed to hear him say,
"The fish will suffer some to-day."

'Twas more than I could stand just then;
I got up to go off home, when
Someone kissed me on the cheek,
An' hugged me so I couldn't speak.
You wouldn't believe it, like as not,
But 'twas Jack's mother, an' a lot
Of great big tears came stealin' down
Right on my face. She didn't frown
A single bit—kept sayin' low,
"My blue-eyed boy, I loved you so!"

Of course, I knew just right away
That she meant Jack. My eyes are gray,
But Jack, he had the bluest eyes,
Blue like you see up in the skies,
An' shine that used to come and go—
One misses eyes like his, you know.

An' by-an'-by she up an' tried
To tell me that she'd cried an' cried
A thinkin' of the times that she
Had scolded Jack an' scolded me,
An' other things that I won't tell
To anyone, because—Oh, well,
Boys can't do much, but they can hold
Tight on to secrets till they're old.
She's Jack's relation, that's why she
Feels kind of lovin' like to me.
But when she called me her own lad,
Oh, say, I felt just awful bad;
My head it went round in a whirl—
I up an' cried just like a girl.

But say, if Jack could see us two
He'd laugh a little, don't you know;
For if I'd ever brag around
That I'd lick some one safe an' sound,
He'd laugh an' say, "Jim, hold your jaw!
You know you're scared to death of maw."
Oh, I'd give all this world away
If I could hear him laugh to-day!

I get so lonesome, it's so still,
An' him out sleepin' on that hill;
There's nothin' seems just worth the while
A doin' up in the old style;
'Cause everything we used to do
Seemed allus just to need us two.
My throat aches till I think 'twill crack—
I don't know why—it must be Jack.
There ain't no fun, there ain't no stir.
His mother—well, it's hard on her,
But she can knit an' sew, an' such—
Oh, she can't miss him half as much!

AT THE SICK CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL.

A LITTLE crippled figure, two big pathetic eyes,
 A face that looked unchildish, so wan it was and
 wise;
 I watched her as the homesick tears came chasing
 down each cheek.
 "I had to come," she whispered low, "I was so tired
 and weak.
 My spine, you know! I used to be so strong, and tall,
 and straight!
 I went to school and learned to read and write upon
 a slate,
 And add up figures—such a lot, and play with all my
 might,
 Until I hurt my back—since then I just ache day and
 night.
 'Tis most a year since I could stand, or walk around
 at all;
 All I am good for now, you see, is just to cry and
 crawl."

Poor, pale-faced thing! there came to us the laughter
 gay and sweet
Of little ones let out from school, the sound of flying
 feet.
She listened for a moment, then turned her to the
 wall
To hide the tears. " Oh, me!" she cried, " I'm tired
 of it all.
I feel so hurt and useless, why can't I run about
As others do?" " Some day, please God, you will,"
 I said, but doubt
Was in the eyes she turned on mine, and doubt was in
 her tone.
" Perhaps," she faltered, then the pain grew harsh;
 the plaintive moan
Smote sharply on my heart. I knew she had but lately
 come
From mother's care and father's love, and all the
 joys of home.
" I wished I'd lived on earth," she sobbed, " a long,
 long time ago,
When Jesus came at eventide, because He loved folks
 so,
And just by stretching out His hand made all the
 sick folks well.
If it were now, oh, wouldn't I creep close to Him,
 and tell
All that I wanted Him to do. I'd kneel down low
 and say:
' It is my back, dear Jesus, please cure it right
 away.

I'm tired of being weak and sick, I want to jump and
run,

And play at games, and laugh out loud, and have
such heaps of fun!

Be good to your poor crippled girl,' and He would
touch me—so—

And every atom of the pain and crookedness would
go."

I held her close, and kissed her, and soothed her off
to rest,

So frail she was, so homesick for the ones she loved
the best!

.

But yesterday I saw her, and would have passed her
by

Had I not caught the greeting smile, the glance so
bright and shy.

"Can this be you?" I questioned. She laughed, "O
yes, I thought

You'd hardly know me when you came, I've changed,
oh, such a lot!

For see how tall and straight I am! My back don't
hurt at all,

And I can stand and I can walk—I never have to
crawl

I'll tell you, it's a secret, I raced with nurse last
night.

Just think of it! I raced and won," and then, in sheer
delight,

She laughed so loudly and so long the nurse looked
in to say,

“Is not this little girl of ours quite boisterous to-day?”

“They are so good to me,” she said, “I know I’ll
want to cry

When I start off for home next week, and have to
say good-bye.

What if I hadn’t come at all?”—the sweet blue eyes
grew wet—

“My back would ache and throb and hurt—I’d be a
cripple yet.

For folks as poor as my folks are, they haven’t much
to spare

For nurse’s bills, and doctor’s bills, and all—but
won’t they stare

When I go home, red-cheeked and straight, and fat as
I can be?

My daddy, he will never take his dear eyes off of me;
My mamma, she will cry some tears, and bend her
head and pray,

While all the others kiss and hug; then I can hear
her say:

‘Give me my girlie, she’s been gone so many long
months—five,

And hold me close—oh, I will be the gladdest thing
alive!’”

CHRISTY AND THE PIPERS.

'Twas a score of years since I'd heard the pipes,
 But the other night I heard them;
 There are sweet old memories in my heart,
 And the music woke and stirred them.

In the armories, at the big parade
 The highland regiment was giving,
 A half-dozen pipers piping away—
 Ah! 'twas music, as sure as your living.

Donald's lowland, he shook his head at me,
 And glowered with every feature,
 And a pretty young lassie just behind
 Said: "Oh, what a funny old creature!"

But the skirl o' the pipes got in my ears,
 In my eyes, and made them misty;
 I laughed and I cried, and Donald said low:
 "Dinna act so daft, noo, Christy!"

“ Do ye no see the elder sitting there?
Dinna act sae daft, my wooman.
Can ye no hear the airs o’ auld lang syne
Wi’oot fashin’ yersel’ sae, wooman?”

But the skirl o’ the pipes got in my heart,
It got in my throat and choked me,
It got in my feet, and tapped my toes,
And my shame-faced Donald poked me.

“ But isn’t it grand? O, isn’t it grand?”
“ Ay, a fine auld player is Mylands,
But the pipes’ wild sound disna stir my bluid”—
He was not born in the highlands.

Do you know what I saw as I sat there?
I saw the hills and the heather,
The green, and the lads and the lassies there
All dancing the reels together.

I saw our glen, half hid, and the rocks
Standing guard like grim old watchmen.
Oh, the land o’ heather and hill and loch
Must e’en be dear to a Scotchman.

And I saw, too, the soldiers blithe and brave
Their flag to the breeze unfurling,
As they marched away on a morning fair
To the bagpipes’ merry skirling.

My brother was one. As he kissed my cheek,
I could hear him proudly saying:
“ Ho! you’ll know when we come marching home,
For you’ll hear our pipers playing.”

Oh, the bonniest lads in kilt and hose—
Braver men, you cannot find them—
And few, so few, came marching home
To the loved ones left behind them.

’Twas a loyal heart, and a strong right arm,
With a stubborn foe before them;
A soldier’s grave in a far off land,
And God’s blue sky bending o’er them.

As I hearkened to sweet old martial airs
I could hear my brother saying:
“ Ho! you’ll know when we come marching home,
For you’ll hear our pipers playing.”

There are only harps in heaven, I’m told,
And maybe I shouldn’t say it,
For a harp of gold’s a wondrous thing
In a hand that’s skilled to play it.

But those highland lads, ’twas the pibroch’s call
They heard morning, noon, and even,
And the pibroch’s call, I believe in my heart,
They will hear in the streets of heaven.

They marched to the old beloved airs
 'Mid the bullets' hail and rattle;
'Twas the last sweet sound that fell on their ears
 'Mid the clamor and clang of battle.

O a harp when an angel strikes the strings
 Is softer and sweeter, but try
As I will, I cannot fancy a harp
 In the hands of, say, Peter MacKay.

And were an angel to proffer him one,
 Methinks I can hear him saying:
“ 'Twas not on an instrument like the same
 That Pete MacKay will be playing,

“ For she neffer set eyes on it before,
 Isn't quick to learn, or cleffer;
She'd break the strings if she took it in hand,
 She couldn't do it, whateffer.

“ So please be excusing old Pete McKay—
 But hark! bring the chanter to me,
I'll play the 'March o' the Cameron Men,'
 And afterward 'Bonnie Dundee.' ”

I told this to Donald late that night;
 He said, as he sipped his toddy,
“ Do ye ken ye shocked the elder the night?
 Yersel' is the doited body.

“ And are ye speaking o’ bagpipes in Heaven?
Ah, Christy, I’m that astounded
I’ll hae the guid meenister speak tae ye,
For, Christy, ye’re no weel groounded.”

Well, if it is heresy to believe
In the promise of the Father,
“ Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard,”
I am heretical, rather.

I believe when the last loud trump shall sound,
The old flag again unfurling,
My highland lads will come marching home
To the bagpipes grandly skirling.

THE STABLE-BOY'S GUEST.

THE Wise Men came to the inn that night,
“ Now open to us,” they cried,
“ We have journeyed far that we might kneel
To One who doth here abide.”

The door was opened with eager haste.
“ Of whom do ye come in quest?
Can it be that a lord of high degree
Is with us this night as guest?”

The Wise Men answered: “The eastern sky
Is luminous still, and clear,
With the radiance of a golden star
That hath led our footsteps here.

“ Blessed, O keeper, this inn of thine,
Both thatch and foundation stone,
For the open door and hearth-fire warm
When the King came to His own!”

“ The King! the King!” loud the keeper’s cry,
“ The King in this house of mine!
Lights ho! lights ho! set the place aglow,
Bring forth the meat and the wine!

“ The King! let the guest-room be prepared—
Honor and homage we pay
To royal son of a royal line
Who tarries with us to-day!”

From room to room of the inn they went,
The Wise Men and keeper proud,
But not a trace of the One they sought
Found they in that motley crowd.

“ You have other guests?” the Wise Men asked,
And the keeper’s face flamed red;
“ But a straggling pair who came so late
They found neither room nor bed.”

“ My masters,” a lad said timidly,
“ As I gave the cattle feed,
Came creeping down to the stable door
A woman in sorest need.

“ I made her a bed in the manger low,
At head of the oxen mild,
And, masters, I heard a moan of pain,
Then the cry of a new-born child.”

“A prince shalt thou be!” the Wise Men cried,
“For hearkening to that moan,
A prince shalt thou be for succor given
When the King came to His own!”

“Nay, I’m but a stable-boy,” he smiled,
With his eager eyes aglow;
“No King, but a little naked child,
Sleeps out in my manger low.”

.
Hast come to these homes of ours, O Christ,
In quest of a meal or bed,
And found no welcoming cheer set forth,
Nor place to pillow thine head?

Give us a heart aflame with love,
Filled with a pity divine,
Then come Thou as beggar, or babe, or king,
The best that we have is Thine.

SOLDIERS ALL.

THEY'RE praying for the soldier lads in grim old London town;

Last night I went, myself, and heard a bishop in his gown

Confiding to the Lord of Hosts his views of this affair.

"We do petition Thee," he said, "to have a watchful care

Of all the stalwart men and strong who at their country's call

Went sailing off to Africa to fight, perchance to fall!"

"Amen!" a thousand voices cried. I whispered low: "Dear Lord,

A host is praying for the men, I want to say a word
For those who stay at home and wait—the mothers
and the wives.

Keep close to them and help them bear their cheerless, empty lives!"

The Bishop prayed: "Our cause is good, our quarrel right and just;

The God of battles is our God, and in His arm we trust."

He never got that prayer of his in any printed book,
It came straight from the heart of him, his deep voice,
how it shook!

And something glistened in his eye and down his
flushed cheek ran.

I like a Bishop best of all when he is just a man.

"Amen!" they cried out louder still, but I bent low
my head;

"Dear Christ, be kind to hearts that break for loved
ones dying—dead;

Keep close to women folk who wait beset with
anxious fears,

The wan-faced watchers whose dim eyes are filled
with bitter tears!

I know, dear Christ, how hard it is," I whispered as
I kneeled,

"For long ago my bonnie boy fell on the battle-field.
Find comfort for the broken hearts of those weighed
down to-day

With love and longing for the ones in danger far
away."

"They will not shrink," the Bishop prayed, "nor
fear a soldier's grave;

Nay, each man will acquit himself like Briton true
and brave.

O God of battles, march with them, keep guard by
day and night,
And arm them with a trust in Thee when they go up
to fight!"

"Amen!" a sound of muffled sobs. The deep voice
trembled some,
But I, with hot tears on my face, prayed hard for
those at home:
"Keep watch and ward of all that wait in fever of
unrest,
Who said good-bye and let them go, the ones they
loved the best!
O comfort, Christ! Above the din of martial clamor,
hark!
The saddest sound in all God's world—a crying
in the dark."

AS GOOD AS A GIRL.

OH, a big broad-shouldered fellow was Ben,
 And homely as you would see,
 Such an awkward walker and stammering talker,
 And as bashful as he could be.

The son of a lone, widowed mother was he,
 And right well did he act his part,
 A giant at sowing and reaping and mowing—
 His farm was the pride of his heart.

His mother depended on his strong arm;
 In the cottage so neat and trim
 He kept the fires burning, did sweeping and
 churning—
 Oh, the odd jobs saved up for him!

“ My Ben’s a comfort,” she said every day,
 With pride that made his head whirl,
 “ As handy at sweeping as he is at reaping—
 Ben is just as good as a girl!”

“ A six-foot fellow to work round the house!
We’ll call him ‘Miss Ben,’ ” said the girls;
But Ben, heaven bless him, never let this distress him
Till there came a day when the curls

And blue eyes of Gladys, the prettiest girl,
And the proudest in all the place,
His young heart set beating at every chance meeting—
Though she only laughed in his face.

“ I’ll have none but a gay and a gallant man ”—
Her lips took a scornful curl—
“ Your pride is in hearing your mother declaring,
‘Ben is just as good as a girl!’ ”

But sweet little Marjory laughed not at Ben;
He was homely, awkward, shy,
But she liked the fellow whose voice was so mellow,
And she smiled as she passed him by.

He went to the front when the war broke out,
And filled his post like a man;
The good-natured giant was bold and defiant
As soon as the battle began.

You’d never have thought of the broom and the churn,
Nor of the nickname “Miss Ben,”
Had you heard his voice cheering, seen his arm
clearing
A path for his own gallant men.

Capt. Benjamin Brooks he came riding home
When the war was over and done,
As homely and backward, as shy and as awkward,
As tender and loyal a son.

Now Gladys gave him her sunniest smile—
On heroes she ever did dote—
And the proud little beauty felt it her duty
To be kind to this young man of note.

But Ben, wise fellow, liked Marjory best;
He knew her lips did not curl
When mother said sweetly, “Ben does work so
neatly—
He is just as good as a girl!”

So he wooed and won this Marjory true,
And made her his loving bride,
While Gladys she fretted, bemoaned and regretted
The goal she had missed by her pride.

To-day Ben is filling a prominent place,
A statesman, honest and bold;
He frees the opprest, and he helps the distrest,
Wins love, which is better than gold.

For the very grandest men you can find
In this great world's busy whirl
Are men like my farmer—no praise need be warmer
Than “he's just as good as a girl.”

FOOL'S LUCK.

THE Allans o' Airlie they set muckle store
 On ancestry, acres, and siller,
 Nor cared to remember the good days of yore,
 Nor grandfather Allan, the miller—
 The honest old miller.

“ We're wealthy fowk now, tak' oor place
 wi' the best,”
 Said the heid o' the Allans, one Dougal,
 A man whom Dame Fortune had royally blest,
 Of sensible habits, and frugal—
 Uncommonly frugal.

“ We're honored by great fowk and wise fowk, now
 min',
 O' the kirk each Allan's a pillar—
 What more could we speir o' a providence kin',
 Unless 'twere a little more siller—
 A little more siller.

“ For it's get what ye can, and keep what ye get;
Ye'll fin' this an unco' guid motto,
We chose it lang syne, and we stick to it yet,
Altho' not sae close as we ought to—
Not nearly sae close as we ought to.

“ There is ane o' the name is a spendthrift, an ass;
The reason tae ye I'll discover:
Oor gran'faither marrit an Inverness lass,
Juist because he happened to luve her—
Foolish mon, he happened to luve her!

“ And the wild Highland strain is still i' the bluid—
'Tis i' Colin, as sure's you're leev'ing;
Ye ken how it is wi' the whole Highland brood—
'Tis a' for spending and geeving.

“ Gin ye're freen' o' the clan, why, ask what ye may,
Ye'll get o' the best, ay, get double;
Gin ye're foe o' the clan, weel, juist gang your way
If so be ye're no hunting trouble.

“ Brither Colin was daft when a lad at the school,
Wi' ways and wi' morals improper,
Had high flowing notions—poor family fool,
His notions ha' made him a pauper.

“ What owns he? Bare acres a few, and a house,
Yet when we, last year, were expecting
Twa relatives, ane puir as ony church mouse,
Ane freighted wi' wealth, unreflecting,

“ He spat oot graun’ like, ‘ Sin’ ye’re ower fond o’
pelf

‘ Ye can hae,’ said he, ‘ the rich pairty,
But I’ll tak’ the mon that is puir as mysel’
And gie him a welcome right hearty’—
A welcome right hearty.

“ Gosh! I had tae lauch at the feckless auld mon
As he stood there, his bonnet-strings twirling;
Ye’d think he was chief o’ a whole Highland clan
That marched to the pibroch’s mad skirling.

“ Ah! hot-headed, high-handed, go as you please,
These Highlanders no worth a copper,
Wi’ their kilt and hose, and their uncovered knees—
A bold dress, and highly improper!

“ Oor Colin’s the same; hark ye, Davy and Jock,
Go no to the hills for your mating;
Twa weel dowered lassies o’ guid lowland stock,
’Tis for such I’d hae ye both waiting.

“ Ho! it’s get what ye can, and keep what ye get,—
What is it ye whisper amang ye?
What! oor rich uncle’s deid—weel, weel, dinna fret,
Ah’m certain that he wouldna wrang me.

“ He promised to leave everything he possest—
Before witness promised it fairly—
To the most deserving, the noblest and best
O’ a’ the Allans o’ Airlie.

“ Ye ken I’m the mon. Here’s the lawyer at hand,
(I’m richer a’ready and prooder)

Hark ye! ‘Give and bequeath my gowd and my
land’—

Mr. Grant, I pray ye, speak looder.

“ I’ll buy me the laird’s castle doon by the park—
Oh, me! but I’ll step about rarely.

‘To my nephew, Colin’—it canna’ be—hark!

‘To the grandest Allan o’ Airlie.’

“ To Colin! I’d ficht, but I’ve no got the pluck,
I’m auld, and I’m broken, I tell ye;

I ca’d him a fool—he has had a fool’s luck,

And noo he can buy me and sell me.

“ Now hearken ye, lads, frae the morn till the nicht
It pays best tae act quite sincerely;

Get what ye can—aweel, the motto’s a’richt,

But some things are gotten too dearly.

Ay, some things are gotten too dearly.

“ I’m thinkin’ o’ gran’faither’s Inverness wife,

Nor cattle nor siller she brought him,

Juist a hairt fu’ o’ luve—some queer views o’ life—

How runs that auld ballad she taught him?

“ *I’ve a lowly cot and a wide open door,*

Neither old nor young need pass by, sir;

A piece of red gold for the brother that’s poor—

Ho, a rich, happy man am I, sir!”

“ Aweel! there be lessons ye’ll no learn in school,
It tak’s my breath away fairly—
The ne’er-do-weel Colin, the family fool,
And the graundest Allan o’ Airlie!”

THE HARBOR LIGHTS OF HOME.

J. THOMAS GORDON left home one day,
 Left home for good and all—
 A boy has a right to have his own way
 When he's nearly six foot tall;
 At least, this is what J. Thomas thought,
 And in his own young eyes
 There were very few people quite so good,
 And fewer still quite so wise.

What! tie as clever a lad as he
 Down to commonplace toil?
 Make J. Thomas Gordon a farmer lad,
 A simple son of the soil?
 Not if he knew it—'twould be a sin;
 He wished to rise and soar.
 For men like himself who would do and dare
 Dame Fortune had much in store.

The world was in need of brains and brawn,
 J. Thomas said modestly,

The clever young man was in great demand—

They would see what they would see.

He would make his mark in the busy world,

Some day the daily press

Would herald the glad news forth to the throng,

J. Thomas is a SUCCESS.

Then would the doubters and sceptics all

Say, with regret sincere,

“To think that we gave his hopes and his aims

But an unbelieving sneer!”

As for him, he would kiss his mother,

And give her wealth galore,

Shake the hand of his father—maybe—

Then back to the world once more.

With big ambition and high conceit

Was young J. Thomas filled;

The warning of friends and their arguments

His eloquence quickly stilled.

“You may go,” said the irate father,

“I’ll not urge you to stay;

You will learn your lesson, you headstrong fool,

Be glad to come back some day.”

So J. Thomas Gordon left the farm,

As boys have done before,

And his mother began to count the hours

Till he would be home once more.

The father wearied as time went on—
Missed the boy from his side;
But all through the years the fond mother kept
Her love, her hope, and her pride.
With a mother's beautiful faith, she said:
“ I know my boy will come
So wealthy, so honored, noble and great,
Proudly come marching home.”

And ever she looked at eventide
Into the glowing west
For the dust of the carriage bringing her
The one that she loved the best.
Ah! how she longed to look on his face,
Her stalwart lad and true,
With his sunburned cheek, and his ruddy hair,
And his eyes so bright and blue.

To those who said 'twas cruel of him
Never a line to send,
She had but one answer, with eyes ashine:
“ It will all come right in the end;
He's busy making a name and place,
And I must patient be
Till this clever, ambitious lad of mine
Finds time to come back to me.”

Important and wealthy and famous,
Honored and wise and great!
But look you, who can that ragged tramp be,
Down there by the garden gate,

Pale as if hunger had pressed him sore,
Trembling because so weak,
Pushed on by his longing, held back by shame—
A tear on his poor pale cheek?

'Tis he! Had he come back rich and great
She'd have met him at the door,
But she's down the path with her arms outspread,
Because he has come back poor.
Gone, gone are her day-dreams sweet and fair—
Gone in the swift glad shock
Of folding a ragged tramp in her arms,
But love stands firm as a rock.

She rang the dinner bell long and loud,
The father came with speed;
The welcome he gave the prodigal
Was a tender one indeed.
“The young fool has learned his lesson,”
J. Thomas whispered low.
“So he has—God bless him!” the father cried,
“He'll make a good man, I know.

“Honest, unselfish, and true as steel,
Our boy will stand the test;
Kindly of thought and word and deed—
The homely virtues are best.
I knew when you went, and you know it now,
That all this pride and style,
This yearnin' to fill up the public eye,
Isn't really worth the while.”

Oh, the happy face of the mother
That night as, kneeling low,
Tom said the prayer that he used to say
At her knee so long ago.
A new J. Thomas had this to add—
With his bonnie blue eyes wet—
“Thank God for the home, for the faithful hearts
That never change or forget.”

.

Though far and wide on the world's rough sea
The children, reckless, roam,
The boldest thanks God in some stress of storm
For the harbor lights of home.

THE PREACHER DOWN AT COLES.

HE was not especially handsome, he was not especially smart,
A great big lumbering fellow with a soft and tender heart.
His eyes were gray and honest, his smile a friendly one,
He wore his parson's suit of black on days of state alone;
At other times he went around in clothes the worse of wear,
A blue cloth cap set jauntily upon his thick gray hair.
He cared so little how he looked, so little how he drest,
That he tired the patience sorely of the ones he loved the best.
For a preacher, so they argued, should be dressed like one, of course,
But in the winter it was tweeds, in summer it was worse;
Ducks and flannels would be grimy, if the sad truth must be told,

For he spaded up the gardens of the people who were
old,
And he ran down dusty highways at unministerial
rate,
Going errands for the people who really could not
wait.
His coat-sleeves would be short an inch, his trousers
just the same,
For the washerwoman had them every week that ever
came.
He cared so little how he looked, and never paused to
think
That linen, duck, and flannel were such awful things
to shrink.

His wife, she was the primmest thing, as neat as any
doll,
And looked like one when walking by her husband big
and tall.
It almost broke her heart that he refused to give a
thought
To how he looked, or do the thing, or say the thing he
ought.
Sometimes, though well she loved him, quite high her
temper ran,
For 'tis hard on any woman to have such a careless
man.

Think! when the conference president came visiting
the place,
The preacher down at Coles he had a badly battered
face—

One eye was black as black could be; he looked, so
we've been told,
More like a fierce prize-fighter than a shepherd of
the fold.

"How did it happen?" questioned him the visitor so
wise,

With hint of laughter on his lips, and in his twink-
ling eyes.

"Old Betty Brown," the preacher said—his wife
broke in just here,

"A cross-grained spinster of the place who hates him,
that is clear;

And never did a woman have a meaner tongue than
hers—

The slighting things she says of him, the mischief
that she stirs!"

"Fields have we," said the president, "in country
and in town;

Believe me, Madam, most of them can boast a Betty
Brown."

The preacher stroked his blackened eye, and laughed
good-naturedly.

"She doesn't like me very well, but what of that?"
said he.

"The other night I found the poor old creature sick
in bed,

She 'didn't want no prayin' done,' she very quickly
said,

So, seeing that she was so ill and worn she could not
stir,
I thought with care and patience I could milk the
cow for her.
I stroked old Spot caressingly, and placed my little
can,
But Spot she knew, and I came home a sadder, wiser
man."

The preacher down at Coles he was no orator at all,
But sick, and sad, and sinful were glad to have him
call.

Not that he ever found a host of happy things to say;
In fact, as far as talking went, he might have stayed
away.

But oh, the welcome that he got! I think his big right
hand

Gave such a grip that all the rest they seemed to un-
derstand.

Some of the congregation would have liked a different
man,

He couldn't hope to please them all—few ministers
that can.

Once, at the district meeting, the good old farmer
Bowles

Stood up and spoke his mind about the preacher down
at Coles.

"There's not," he said, "you know it, too, a better
man than he;

An' you fault-finder, carpin' folk—I say this rev-
erently—

If the Lord 'd take an angel and gently turn him loose
To preach down here, do you suppose he'd please the
 hull caboose?
Not much! It's human nature to quarrel with what
 we've got,
An' this man is a better man than we deserve, a lot."

But he did preach curious sermons, just as dry as they
 could be,
And the old folks slumbered through them every Sab-
 bath, peacefully;
But they all woke up the moment the singing would
 begin,
And not an ear was found too dull to drink the music
 in.
For though the preacher could not boast an orator's
 smooth tongue,
He could reach the people's heartstrings when he
 stood up there and sung.

O the wondrous power and sweetness of the voice that
 filled the place!
Everyone that heard it swelling grew the purer for a
 space.
And men could not choose but listen to the singer
 standing there,
Till their worldliness slipped from them, and their
 selfishness and care.

Mourners turned their eyes all misty from the crosses
tall and white
Where their loved ones slumbered softly all the day
and all the night;
Listening, faith rose triumphant over sorrow, loss,
and pain,
Heaven was not a far-off country, they would meet
their own again.
And the white-haired men and women wished the
singing need not cease,
For they seemed to see the beauty of the longed for
Land of Peace.
Upward soared that voice, and upward, with a sweet-
ness naught could stem,
Till each dim eye caught the glory of the new Jerusa-
lem.

He was such a curious fellow, the preacher down at
Coles!
One winter day the word was brought to town by
Farmer Bowles
That in a little shanty, in the hollow by the mill,
Were children gaunt with hunger, a mother sad and
ill,
The father just a drunkard, a vagabond who left
His family for long, long weeks of love and care
bereft.
The squire talked of taking a big subscription up,
And talked, and talked, while in that house was
neither bite nor sup.

O, these talking folks! these talking folks! the poor
would starve and freeze
If the succoring and caring were done by such as
these.

The preacher down at Coles he had not very much to
say;
He harnessed up the old roan horse and hitched it to
the sleigh,
And piled in so much provisions that his wife said,
tearfully,
She didn't have a cake or pie left in the house for tea.
He filled the sleigh with baskets, and with bundles—
such a pile!
Heaps of wood, and clothes, and victuals—everybody
had to smile
As they watched the old roan canter down the cross-
road, o'er the hill,
To the little cheerless shanty in the hollow by the mill.
The preacher built a fire and bade the children warm
their toes
While he heard the worn-out mother's tale of miseries
and woes.
He brought in a bag of flour, and a turkey big
and fat—
His dainty wife had meant to dine the Ladies' Aid
on that.
He brought in ham and butter, and potatoes in a sack,
A pie or two, a loaf of cake, and doughnuts, such a
stack!

Ah! his wife and her good handmaid had been baking
 many a day,
For the Ladies' Aid would dine there—he had lugged
 it all away.
He brought in a pair of blankets, and a heavy woollen
 quilt;
Betty Brown, who happened in there, said she thought
 that she would wilt,
For these things the active members of the Missionary
 Band
Had gathered for the heathen in a far-off foreign land.
“These belong unto the Lord, sir,” Betty said, “I
 think you'll find,”
But he answered her quite gently, “Very well, He will
 not mind.”
“To see him making tea for the woman in the bed
Made me wish I had been kinder to the preacher,”
 Betty said.
Though he was so big and clumsy he could step around
 so light,
And to see him getting dinner to the children's huge
 delight!
It was not till he had warmed them, and had fed them
 there, that day,
That he whispered very softly: “Little children, let
 us pray.”
Then he gave them to the keeping of a Father kind
 and wise
In a way that brought the tear-drops into hard old
 Betty's eyes.

She felt an aching in her throat, and when she cried,
 “*Amen!*”
Other folks might flout the preacher, Betty never
 would again.

He took up the fresh air movement, but the people
 down at Coles
Shook their head—a preacher’s work, they said, was
 saving precious souls,
Not worrying lest the waifs and strays that throng the
 city street
Should pine for want of country air, and country food
 to eat.

Lawyer Angus, at the meeting, spoke against new-
 fangled things;

“*Seems to me our preacher’s bow, friends, has a
 muckle lot of strings.*”

Merchant Jones said trade was failing, rent was high
 and clerks to pay;

Not a dollar could he give them, he was very grieved
 to say.

Old Squire Hays was buying timber, needed every
 cent and more;

Doctor Blake sat coldly smiling—then the farmer took
 the floor.

“*Wish,*” he said, “*our hearts were bigger, an’ our
 speeches not so long;*

*I would move right here the preacher tunes us up a
 little song.*”

Sing? I wish you could have heard him—simple
songs of long ago,
Old familiar things that held us—warm that golden
voice and low —
Songs of summer in the woodlands, cowslips yellow
in the vale;
Songs of summer in the city, and the children wan
and pale,
Till we saw the blist'ring pavement pressed by tired
little feet,
Heard the baby voices crying for the meadows wide
and sweet.

“ Now we'll take up the collection,” said the wily
farmer Bowles,
And they showered in their money, did the people
down at Coles.
“ Here's a cheque,” said lawyer Angus, “ 'tis the
best that I can do;
Man, you'd have us in the poorhouse if you sang your
sermons through!”

The very careless fellow still goes his cheery way
Unmindful of what people think or of what people
say.
Some still are finding fault with him—he doesn't
mind it much—
Laughs when they make remarks about his clothes and
shoes and such,

Declare his sermons have no point, and quarrel with
his text,
As people will, but oh, it makes his pretty wife so
vext!
“I think,” she says, “as much of him as any woman
can,
But ’tis most aggravating to have such a careless
man.”

There are those who think him perfect, shout his
praises with a will.
He has labored for the Master, he is laboring for Him
still;
And the grumbling does not move him, nor the praises
sung abroad—
Things like these seem only trifles to the man who
works for God.
Farmer Bowles summed up the total in his own
original way
When he spoke at the Convention that was held the
other day.
“Never knew a better worker, never knew a kinder
man;
Lots of preachers are more stylish, keep themselves so
spic-and-span
You could spot ’em out for preachers if you met ’em
walkin’ round
Over on the Fejee Islands, silk hat, long coat, I’ll be
bound.

Our man's different, but, I tell you, when it comes to
doing good

There's not one can beat him at it, an' I want this
understood.

Ask the sad folks and the sinful, ask the fallen ones
he's raised,

Ask the sick folks and the poor folks, if you want to
hear him praised.

Orator? Well, maybe not, friends, but in caring for
men's souls

There stand few men half so faithful as the preacher
down at Coles."

CHORE TIME.

WHEN I'm at gran'dad's on the farm,
I hear along 'bout six o'clock,
Just when I'm feelin' snug an' warm,
"Ho, Bobby, come and feed your stock."

I jump an' get into my clothes;
It's dark as pitch, an' shivers run
All up my back. Now, I suppose
Not many boys would think this fun.

But when we get out to the barn
The greedy pigs begin to squeal,
An' I throw in the yellow corn,
A bushel basket to the meal.

Then I begin to warm right up,
I whistle "Yankee Doodle" through,
An' wrastle with the collie pup—
And sometimes gran'dad whistles too.

The cow-shed door, it makes a din
Each time we swing it open wide;
I run an' flash the lantern in,
There stand the shorthorns side by side.

Their breathin' makes a sort of cloud
Above their heads—there's no frost here.
“ My beauties,” gran'dad says out loud,
“ You'll get your breakfasts, never fear.”

When up I climb into the loft
To fill their racks with clover hay,
Their eyes, all sleepy like and soft,
A heap of nice things seem to say.

The red ox shakes his curly head,
An' turns on me a solemn face;
I know he's awful glad his shed
Is such a warm and smelly place.

An' last of all the stable big,
With harness hanging on each door,
I always want to dance a jig
On that old musty, dusty floor.

It seems so good to be alive,
An' tendin' to the sturdy grays,
The sorrels, and old Prince, that's five—
An' Lightfoot with her coaxing ways.

My gran'dad tells me she is mine,
An' I'm that proud! I braid her mane,
An' smooth her sides until they shine,
An' do my best to make her vain.

When we have measured oats for all,
Have slapped the grays upon the flanks,
An' tried to pat the sorrels tall,
An' heard them whinny out their thanks,

We know it's breakfast time, and go
Out past the yellow stacks of straw,
Across the creek that used to flow,
But won't flow now until a thaw.
Behind the trees the sky is pink,
The snow drifts by in fat white flakes,
My gran'dad says: "Well, Bob, I think
There comes a smell of buckwheat cakes."

A BOY'S TRIALS.

WHEN I was but a little lad
 One thing I could not bear,
 It was to stand at mother's knee
 And have her comb my hair.

They didn't keep boys' hair as short
 As it's kept now-a-days,
 And mine was always tangled up
 In twenty different ways.

I'd twist my mouth and grit my teeth,
 And say it wasn't fair—
 It was a trial, and no mistake,
 When mother combed my hair.

She'd brush and brush each stubborn curl
 That grew upon my pate,
 And with her scissors nip and clip
 To make the edges straight.

Then smooth it down until it shone,
While I would grin and bear,
And feel a martyr through and through,
When mother combed my hair.

She'd take my round chin in her hand
And hold it there the while
She made the parting carefully,
Then tell me with a smile:

“ Don't push your cap down on your curls
And spoil my work and care;
He is a pretty little lad
When mother combs his hair.”

I'd hurry out and rumple up
That mop of hair so thick—
A vandal, I, for she had worked
So hard to make it slick—

And wish I were a grown-up man
So nobody would dare
To put a washrag in my ears,
Or comb my tangled hair.

Heigho! now that I'm bald and gray,
Methinks I would be glad
To have her smooth my brow and cheeks,
And whisper, “Mother's lad!”

A longing for the care-free days
Doth take me unaware;
To stand, a boy, at mother's knee
And have her comb my hair.

AN APRIL FOOL OF LONG AGO.

IN powdered wig and buckled shoe,
Knee-breeches, coat and waistcoat gay,
The wealthy squire rode forth to woo
Upon a first of April day.

He would forget his lofty birth,
His spreading acres, and his pride,
And Betty, fairest maid on earth,
Should be his own—his grateful bride.

The maid was young, and he was old;
The maid was good to look upon.
Naught cared she for his land or gold,
Her love was for the good squire's son.

He found her as the noonday hush
Lay on the world, and called her name.
She looked up, conscious, and her blush
A tender interest did proclaim.

For he was Hubert's sire, and she
To keep a secret tryst did go.
He said: "Methinks she cares for me"—
That April fool of long ago.

The flattered squire his suit did press
Without delay. "Say, wilt thou come,"
He said, with pompous tenderness,
"And share my wealth and grace my home?"

"Kind sir," the lovely Betty cried,
"I'm but a lass of low degree."
"The love that is controlled by pride
Is not true love at all," quoth he.

"I hold a man should woo and wed
Where'er he wills—should please himself."
"There is the barrier strong," she said,
"Of pedigree, and place, and pelf.

"Could one so lowly hope to grace
Your home?" Right proud his air and tone:
"You're pure of heart and fair of face;
Dear Betty, you would grace a throne!"

"Since you so highly think of me"—
Her tears and laughter were at strife—
"You will not mind so much, maybe,
That I am Hubert's promised wife."

Pale went the good squire's florid cheek,
His wrath flamed out—but Betty stood,
Brown-haired, red-lipped, blue-eyed and meek,
A sight to make a bad man good.

She won on him. "But why this guile—
This secrecy?" His voice was rough.
"We feared," she whispered, with a smile,
"You would not think me good enough."

"An April fool am I. Come, come—
My offer stands. As Hubert's wife,"
He laughed, "you'll share my wealth and home
And brighten up a lonely life."

He kissed her cheek and rode away.
Unbroken was his heart, I wist,
For he was thinking of a day—
A day back in youth's rosy mist—

And of a form and of a face.
"My dear, dead love," he whispered low,
The while he rode at sober pace,
That April fool of long ago.

FOR HE WAS SCOTCH, AND SO WAS SHE.

THEY were a couple well content
 With what they earned and what they spent,
 Cared not a whit for style's decree—
 For he was Scotch, and so was she.

And oh, they loved to talk of Burns—
 Dear blithesome, tender Bobby Burns!
 They never wearied of his song,
 He never sang a note too strong.
 One little fault could neither see—
 For he was Scotch, and so was she.

They loved to read of men who stood
 And gave for country life and blood,
 Who held their faith so grand a thing
 They scorned to yield it to a king.
 Ah, proud of such they well might be—
 For he was Scotch, and so was she.

From neighbors' broils they kept away;
No liking for such things had they,
And oh, each had a canny mind,
And could be deaf, and dumb, and blind.
With words or pence was neither free—
For he was Scotch, and so was she.

I would not have you think this pair
Went on in weather always fair,
For well you know in married life
Will come, sometimes, the jar and strife;
They couldn't always just agree—
For he was Scotch, and so was she.

But near of heart they ever kept,
Until at close of life they slept;
Just this to say when all was past,
They loved each other to the last!
They're loving yet, in heaven, maybe—
For he was Scotch, and so was she.

THE PLOUGHMAN.

FRIEND, mark these muscles; mine's a frame
Born, grown, and fitted for the toil.
My father, tiller of the soil,
Bequeathed them to me with my name.

Fear work? Nay, many times and oft
Upon my brow the sweat-bead stands,
And these two brown and sinewy hands,
Methinks, were never white or soft.

I earn my bread and know its worth,
Through days that chill and days that warm,
I wrest it with my strong right arm
From out the bosom of the earth.

The moneyed man may boast his wealth,
The high-born boast his pedigree,
But greater far, it seems to me,
My heritage of brawn and health.

My sinews strong, my sturdy frame,
My independence free and bold—
Mine is the richest dower, I hold,
And ploughman is a noble name.

Nor think me all uncouth and rough,
For, as I turn the furrows o'er,
Far clearer than the threshing-floor
I see the tender growing stuff.

A lab'rer, I, the long day through;
The lonely stretch of field and wood
Seem pleasant things to me, and good;
The river sings, the heaven's blue

Bends down so near the sun-crowned hill—
Thank God, I have the eyes to see
The beauty and the majesty
Of Nature, and the heart to thrill

At crimson sunset, dawn's soft flush,
The fields of gold that stretch afar,
The glimmer of the first pale star
That heralds in the evening's hush.

They lie who say that labor makes
A brute thing, an insensate clod,
Of man, the masterpiece of God;
They lie who say that labor takes

All from us save the lust of pelf,
Dulls eye, and ear, and soul, and mind,
For no man need be deaf or blind
Unless he wills it so himself.

This life I live's a goodly thing—
My soul keeps tune to one glad song
The while I turn the furrows long—
A ploughman happy as a king.

TWO MONUMENTS.

Two men were born the self-same hour:
The one was heir to untold wealth,
To pride of birth and love of power;
The other's heritage was health.

A sturdy frame, an honest heart,
Of human sympathy a store,
A strength and will to do his part,
A nature wholesome to the core.

The two grew up to man's estate,
And took their places in the strife:
One found a sphere both wide and great,
One found the toil and stress of life.

Fate is a partial jade, I trow;
She threw the rich man gold and fame,
The laurel wreath to deck his brow,
High place, the multitude's acclaim.

The common things the other had—
The common hopes to thrill him deep,
The common joys to make him glad,
The common griefs to make him weep.

No high ambitions fired his breast;
The peace of God, the love of friend,
Of wife and child, these seemed the best,
These held and swayed him to the end.

The two grew old, and death's clear call
Came to them both the self-same day:
To him whose name was known to all,
To him who walked his lowly way.

Down to his grave the rich man went,
With cortege long, with pomp and pride,
O'er him was reared a monument
That told his virtues far and wide;

Told of his wealth, his lineage high,
His statesmanship, his trophies won,
How he had filled the public eye—
But empty praise when all was done.

The other found a narrow bed
Within God's acre, peaceful, lone;
The throng cared not that he was dead,
A man uncultured and unknown.

But in the house that he had left
A woman whispered through her tears:
"Christ, comfort me, who am bereft
Of love that failed not through the years."

And oft his stalwart sons and tall
Would murmur as their eyes grew dim:
"A useful life is best of all;
God grant we pattern after him!"

A sick man sighed: "I'll miss his smile;"
A shrivelled crone did shake her head
And mutter to herself the while
How oft his hand had given bread.

A maimed child sobbed: "He carried me
To gather blossoms in the wood,"
And more than one said, brokenly:
"A man who always did me good."

One came at twilight to the grave,
And knelt and kissed the fresh-turned sod.
"Oh, faithful soul," she cried, "and brave,
'Twas you that led me back to God!

"Back from the sin, the shame, the snare—
Forget your trust and faith?—not I;
Each helpful word, each tender prayer,
I will remember till I die!"

Two men that sleep: above the one
The monument an artist's hand
Has fashioned from the block of stone,
A thing of beauty, tall and grand;

Above the other naught—what then?
Ere he did fold his hands for rest,
He builded in the hearts of men
The fairest monument and best.

THE LONESOMEST HOUSE.

It's the lonesomest house you ever saw,
This big gray house where I stay.
I don't call it living at all, at all,
Since my mother's gone away.

Only four weeks now—it seems a year—
Gone to heaven, the preacher said,
And my heart is just broke awaiting her,
And my eyes are always red.

I stay out of doors till I'm almost froze,
'Cause every identical room
Seems empty enough to scare a boy,
And packed to the door with gloom.

Oh, but I hate to come in to my meals,
And her not there in her place,
Pouring the tea, and passing the things,
With that lovin' shine on her face!

But night-time is worse. I creep up the
stair

And to bed as still 's a mouse,
And cry in my pillow, it seems so hard
To stay in this old gray house!

And nobody giving me good-night hugs,
Or smoothing my hair back—so;
Things a boy makes fun of before his chums,
But things that he likes, you know.

There's no one to go to when things go
wrong—

Oh, she was so safe and sure!
There wasn't a thing could tackle a boy
That she couldn't up and cure.

There's lots of women, it seems to me,
That wouldn't be missed so much,
The women whose boys are 'most growed
up,
And old maid aunties, and such.

I can't understand it at all, at all,
Why on earth she should have to go,
And leave me here in this old gray house,
Needin' an' wantin' her so!

Oh, the very lonesomest thing of all
In the wide, wide world to-day
Is a big boy of twelve whose heart's just
broke
'Cause his mother's gone away!

DADDY'S BOY.

It is time for bed, so the nurse declares,
But I slip off to the nook,
The cozy nook at the head of the stairs,
Where daddy's reading his book.

"I want to sit here awhile on your knee,"
I say, as I toast my feet,
"And I want you to pop some corn for me,
And give me an apple sweet."

I tickle him under the chin—just so—
And I say, "Please can't I, dad?"
Then I kiss his mouth so he can't say no
To his own little black-eyed lad.

"You can't have a pony this year at all,"
Says my stingy Uncle Joe,
After promising it—and there's the stall
Fixed ready for it, you know.

One can't depend on his uncle, I see,
It's daddies that are the best,
And I find mine and climb up on his knee
As he takes his smoke and rest.

I tickle him under the chin—just so—
And I say, "Please can't I, dad?"
Then I kiss his mouth so he can't say no
To his own little black-eyed lad.

I want to skate, and oh, what a fuss
For fear I'll break through the ice!
This woman that keeps our house for us,
She isn't what I call nice.

She wants a boy to be just like a girl,
To play in the house all day,
Keep his face all clean and his hair in curl,
But dad doesn't think that way.

I tickle him under the chin—just so—
And I say, "Please can't I, dad?"
Then I kiss his mouth so he can't say no
To his own little black-eyed lad.

"You're growing so big," says my dad to me.
"Soon be a man, I suppose,
Too big to climb on your old dad's knee
And toast your ten little toes."

Then his voice it gets the funniest shake,
And oh, but he hugs me tight!
I say, when I can't keep my eyes awake,
“Let me sleep with you to-night.”

I tickle him under the chin—just so—
And I say, “Please can't I, dad?”
Then I kiss his mouth so he can't say no
To his own little black-eyed lad.

JANET.

JANET, she was trim and small,
 Swift her feet could go;
 Sandy, he was great and tall,
 Sandy, he was slow.

Dark the curls on Janet's heid,
 Dark her een, and true;
 Sandy's hair was straicht an' reid,
 Sandy's een were blue.

Sandy had been coortin' lang,
 Sandy wasna bold,
 Blushed when Janet trilled the sang,
 Sweet as it is old:

*“ Gin a body meet a body
 Comin' through the rye,
 Gin a body kiss a body,
 Need a body cry?”*

Janet's lips were reid and ripe,
Full o' sic delichts;
Longing for them spoiled the pipe
Sandy smoked o' nichts.

Janet laughed when he would sigh,
Janet wasna kin'.
Spite o' a' as days went by
Janet filled his min'.

When in kirk he sat and heard
Sermons deep and lang,
Every fluttering bird ootside
Seemed piping Janet's sang.

Through the psalm, and through
the prayer,
Thought went wanderin' wide—
O what were toil, what were care,
Wi' Janet by his side?

Janet, wi' the waist sae sma',
Janet, dear indeed;
Sermon, psalm, and prayer, and a',
Sandy didna heed—

Going hame at sober pace
Made confession—sae:
“Hearken, Lord! hide no Thy face
Though I go astray.

“ Help me juist tae do my pairt—
Win her if I can—
Sae I plead wi’ a’ my hairt,
Help a sinfu’ mon!”

Surely faith was in that prayer.
Ere an hour went by
Janet cam’ wi’ lightsome air
Through the fields o’ rye.

Sandy, tak’ ye hairt o’ grace—
Surely ’tisna wrang—
Here’s the lass wi’ saucy face,
How runs Janet’s sang?

*“Gin a body meet a body
Comin’ through the rye,
Gin a body kiss a body
Need a body cry?”*

THE LAD FROM INVERNESS.

HE would go, they could not keep him, for he came of
fighting stock;
Though his widowed mother pleaded, he was firm as
any rock.
Well he loved the patient woman who had nursed him
on her breast,
Been quite blind to all his follies,—but he loved his
country best.
“ I’ll come home again,” he told her; “ I’ll come
home again some day,”
Laid his face to her’s and kissed her, said good-bye
and marched away.
Stronger than the voice that pleaded, “ Laddie, laddie,
bide at home,”
Was the shrill voice of the bugle and the deep voice
of the drum,
Calling to him all the day, calling to him in his
dreams:
“ Come, lad! Come, lad! Come! Come! Come!”

His face was like a maiden's face, so smooth it was,
and fair;
The laughter in his eyes of gray, the sunshine in his
hair;
But a man's heart, true and gallant, beat beneath the
tartan plaid,
And a strong right arm he boasted, did this bonnie
Highland lad.
Oh, the battlefield is gruesome, with its dying and its
dead,
But 'twas to the field of battle that the drum and
bugle led—
Magersfontein—and the bullets biting fiercely left
and right,
And the lad in kilt and hose there in the thickest of
the fight.
Fearful odds, and none to help them, fight they
boldly, undismayed,
Gallant clansmen of the north land! Brave old High-
lander brigade!
Someone blundered, this we know,
When you met the ambushed foe,
But you fought as heroes fight, and died as heroes die;
This we know, this we know.

Where the fighting had been fiercest, as the sun sank
in the west,
Did they find the widow's laddie, with a bullet in his
breast,

And his smiling face turned upward. Did he dream
at last—who knows—
Of the far-off hills of Scotland? Lying there in kilt
and hose,
With the gold hair gleaming brightly underneath the
bonnet blue,
And the tartan plaid laid gently o'er the heart so
brave and true.
Stilled forever! With death's coming did there fall
upon his ear
Music that he loved to list to, bugle call so high and
clear,
Thrilling, stirring, sweeter, shriller, and the deep
voice of the drum,
Calling to him through the shadows, calling softly
through the shadows,
“Come, lad! Come, lad! Come! Come! Come!”

ALL ON AN APRIL MORNING.

THE teacher was wise and learned, I wis,
 All nonsense she held in scorning,
 But you never can tell what the primmest miss
 Will do of a bright spring morning.

What this one did was to spread a snare
 For feet of a youth unheeding,
 As March, with a meek and lamb-like air,
 To its very last hour was speeding.

Oh, he was the dullard of his class,
 For how can a youth get learning
 With his eyes aye fixed on a pretty lass
 And his heart aye filled with yearning?

“ Who finds ’mong the rushes which fringe a
 pool,”
 She told him, “ the first wind blossom,
 May wish what he will ”—poor April fool,
 With but one wish in his bosom.

Her gray eyes danced—on a wild-goose chase
He'd sally forth on the morrow,
And, later, she'd laugh in his sombre face,
And jest at his words of sorrow.

But penitence and a troubled mind
Were fruits of the night's reflection;
After all, he was simple, and strong, and kind—
'Twas wrong to flout his affection.

They met on the hill as she walked to school;
He said, unheeding her blushes,
“ Here's the early flower your April fool
Found growing among the rushes.

“ Take it or leave it as you will ”—
His voice ringing out so clearly
Awoke in her heart a happy thrill—
“ You know that I love you dearly.”

Day-dreams indulged as she taught the school
Held lovers kneeling and suing;
“ Take it or leave it ”—her April fool
Was masterful in his wooing.

He gave her the flower—she gave him a kiss—
His suit she had long been scorning;
But you never can tell what the primmest miss
Will do of a bright spring morning.

BILLY.

O! HE was the boy of the house, you know,
A jolly and rollicking lad;
He never was sick, he never was tired,
And nothing could make him sad.

If he started to play at sunrise,
Not a rest would he take at noon;
No day was so long from beginning to end,
But his bed-time came too soon.

Did someone urge that he make less noise,
He would say, with a saucy grin:
“ Why, one boy alone doesn’t make much stir—
O sakes! I wish I was a twin.

“ There’s two of twins, and it must be fun
To go double at everything;
To holler by twos, and whistle by twos,
To stamp by twos, and to sing!”

His laugh was something to make you glad,
So brimful was it of joy;
A conscience he had, perhaps, in his breast,
But it never troubled the boy.

You met him out on the garden path,
The terrier at his heels,
And knew by the shout he hailed you with
How happy a youngster feels.

The maiden auntie was half distraught
With his tricks as the days went by;
“The most mischievous child in all the world!”
She said with a shrug and a sigh.

His father owned that her words were true,
His mother declared each day
He was putting wrinkles into her face,
And turning her brown hair gray.

His grown-up sister referred to him
As “a trouble,” “a trial,” “a grief”;
The way he ignored all rules, she said,
Was something beyond belief!

It never troubled the boy of the house,
He revelled in racket and din,
Had only one regret in the world—
He hadn’t been born a twin!

.

There's nobody making a noise to-day,
There's nobody stamping the floor,
'Tis strangely silent upstairs and down—
White ribbons upon the door.

The terrier's whining out in the sun:
"Where's my comrade?" he seems to say.
Turn your plaintive eyes away, little dog,
There's no frolic for you to-day.

The freckle-faced girl from the house next door
Is sobbing her young heart out.
Don't cry, little girl, you'll soon forget
The laugh and the merry shout.

The grown-up sister is kissing his face,
And calling him "angel" and "sweet,"
And the maiden aunt is nursing the boots
He wore on his restless feet.

So big, so solemn the old house seems—
No uproar, no racket, no din,
No shrill peal of laughter, no voice shrieking
out,
"O sakes! I wish I was a twin!"

A man and a woman white with grief
Watch the wearisome moments creep—
Oh! the loneliness touches everything,
The boy of the house is asleep!

SLY BOY.

I WAS the slyest boy at home,
The slyest boy at school,
I wanted all the world to know
That I was no one's fool.

I kept my childish hopes and schemes
Locked closely in my breast,
No single secret shared with Bob,
The chum I liked the best.

I never showed my squirrel's nest,
Nor beaver dam, nor cave,
Nor fortress where I used to go
To be a soldier brave.

Oh, I was sly, just awful sly,
In winter, summer, spring,
While Bob would tell me all he knew,
I never told a thing.

And yet Bob always got ahead;
 I'd find the careless knave
 Asleep within my fortress walls,
 And fishing in my cave.

“What, yours!” he said, in great surprise,
 “You should have told me so.
 You never said a word, old chum,
 And how was I to know?”

My slyness hurt more than it helped;
 If Bob had known, you see,
 He was too kind to do his best
 To get ahead of me.

I still was sly when I grew up.
 I fell in love with Nan,
 But scorned to own it to myself
 Or any other man.

So sly was I, Nan never guessed—
 No more did handsome Bob—
 That every time she looked my way
 My heart, it stirred and throbbed.

The same old story! Ere I knew,
 My chum had loved and won.
 When I explained I'd picked her out
 To be my very own,

“What, yours!” he said in great surprise,
“You should have told me so.
You never said a word, old chum,
And how was I to know?”

I’ve learned my lesson, lost my girl;
You’ll own ’tis rather rough.
Henceforward I’ll not be too sly—
I’ll be just sly enough.

Miscellaneous Poems

QUEEN VICTORIA.

1837.

THE sunshine streaming through the stained glass
 Touched her with rosy colors as she stood,
 The maiden Queen of all the British realm,
 In the old Abbey on that soft June day.
 Youth shone within her eyes, where God had set
 All steadfastness, and high resolve, and truth;
 Youth flushed her cheek, dwelt on the smooth
 white brow
 Whereon the heavy golden circlet lay.

The ashes of dead kings, the history of
 A nation's growth, of strife, and victory,
 The mighty past called soft through aisle and
 nave:

“Be strong, O Queen; be strong as thou art fair!”
 A virgin, white of soul and unafraid,
 Since back of her was God, and at her feet
 A people loyal to the core, and strong,
 And loving well her sweetness and her youth.

1901.

Upon her woman's head earth's richest crown
Hath sat with grace these sixty years and more.
Her hand, her slender woman's hand, hath held
The weightiest sceptre, held it with such power
All homage hath been hers, at home, abroad,
Where'er hath dwelt a chivalrous regard
For strength of purpose and for purity,
For grand achievement and for noble aim.

To-day the cares of State no longer vex;
To-day the crown is laid from off her brow.

Dead! The great heart of her no more will beat
With tenderness for all beneath her rule.
Dead! The clear eyes of her no more will guard
The nation's welfare. Dead! The arm of her
No more will strike a mighty blow for right
And justice; make a wide world stand amazed
That one so gentle as old England's Queen
Could be so fearless and so powerful!

Full wearily the sense of grief doth press
And weight us down. The good Queen is no more;
And we are fain to weep as children weep
When greedy death comes to the home and bears
From thence the mother, whose unfailing love
Hath been their wealth, their safeguard, and
their pride.

O bells that toll in every zone and clime!
 There is a sound of sobbing in your breath.
 East, west, north, south, the solemn clamor goes,
 Voicing a great, a universal grief!

THANKFULNESS.

I THANK Thee, Lord,
 For every joyous hour
 That has been mine!
 For every strengthening and helpful word,
 For every tender sound that I have heard,
 I thank Thee, Lord!

I thank Thee, Lord,
 For work and weariness
 That have been mine!
 For patience toward one groping toward the light,
 For mid-day burden and for rest of night,
 I thank Thee, Lord.

THE NATIVE BORN.

THERE'S a thing we love to think of when the summer
 days are long,
 And the summer winds are blowing, and the summer
 sun is strong,
 When the orchards and the meadows throw their
 fragrance on the air,
 When the grain-fields flaunt their riches, and the glow
 is everywhere.

 Something sings it all the day,
 Canada, fair Canada,
 And the pride thrills through and through us,
 'Tis our birthplace, Canada!

There's a thing we love to think of when the frost
 and ice and snow
 Hold high carnival together, and the biting north
 winds blow.
 There's a thing we love to think of through the bitter
 winter hours,
 For it stirs a warmth within us—'tis this fair young
 land of ours.

Something sings it all the day,
Canada, fair Canada,
And the pride thrills through and through us,
'Tis our birthplace, Canada!

Ours with all her youth and promise, ours with all
her strength and might,
Ours with all her mighty waters and her forests deep
as night.
Other lands may far outshine her, boast more charms
than she can claim,
But this young land is our own land, and we love her
very name.

Something sings it all the day,
Canada, fair Canada,
And the pride thrills through and through us,
'Tis our birthplace, Canada!

Let the man born in old England love the dear old
land the most,
For what spot a man is born in, of that spot he's fain
to boast;
Let the Scot look back toward Scotland with a longing
in his eyes,
And the exile from old Erin think her green shores
paradise,
Native born are we, are we,
Canada, fair Canada,
And the pride thrills through and through us,
'Tis our birthplace, Canada!

Well we love that sea-girt island, and we strive to
understand
All the greatness, all the grandeur, of the glorious
Mother Land;
And we cheer her to the skies, cheer her till the echoes
start,
For the old land holds our homage, but the new land
holds our heart!
Native born are we, are we,
Canada, fair Canada!
And the pride thrills through and through us,
'Tis our birthplace, Canada!

THE KING'S GIFT.

TO E. S. R.

THE new year coming to us with swift feet
Is the King's gift,
And all that in it lies
Will make our lives more rounded and complete.
It may be laughter,
May be tear-filled eyes;
It may be gain of love,
Or loss of love;
It may be thorns, or bloom and breath of flowers,
The full fruition of these hopes that move—
It may be what will break these hearts of ours,
What matter? 'Tis the great gift of the King—
We do not need to fear what it may bring.

THE PASSAGE.

O SOUL on God's high seas! the way is strange and
long,
Yet fling your pennons out, and spread your canvas
strong;
For though to mortal eyes so small a craft you seem,
The highest star in heaven doth lend you guiding
gleam.

O soul on God's high seas! look to your course with
care,
Fear most when winds are kind and skies are blue
and fair.
Your helm must sway at touch of no hand save your
own—
The soul that sails on God's high seas must sail alone.

O soul on God's high seas! sail on with steady aim,
Unmoved by winds of praise, untouched by seas of
blame.
Beyond the lonely ways, beyond the guiding star,
There stretches out the strand and golden harbor bar.

AIR CASTLES.

I BUILT a castle in the air—
 A radiant thing made out of dreams;
 Love's dear desire its golden stair—
 Naught heavier than a hope was there—
 A thing of mist and rainbow gleams.
 But when it fell—ah! when it fell,
 Though made o' dreams and mist and shine,
 The mystery of it who can tell?
 Its falling shook both heaven and hell,
 And ground to dust this heart of mine.

YOUTH AND JUNE.

I WAS your lover long ago, sweet June,
 Ere life grew hard; I am your lover still,
 And follow gladly to the wondrous tune
 You pipe on golden reeds to vale and hill.
 I am your lover still—to me you seem
 To hold the fragrance of the joys long dead—
 The brightness and the beauty of the dream
 We dreamed in youth—to hold the tears we shed,
 The laughter of our lips—the faith that lies
 Back in that season dear to every heart,
 Life's springtime, when God's earth and God's blue
 skies
 Are, measured by our glance, not far apart.

THE MOTHER.

As "Peace on earth!" the glad world sings one
 glorious Christmas morn,
 "Peace, peace on earth! Good-will to men! Peace,
 peace! the Christ is born!"
 As through the courts, the wondrous courts, of heaven
 hosannas ring,
 As harpers strike their harps of gold and "Glory!
 Glory!" sing,
 Upon the City's threshold fair
 A woman steps, and lingers there.

The eyes she turns on Peter's face with unshed tears
 are dim,
 "Tell Christ," she says, "a mother waits who fain
 would speak with Him."
 Through all the music, far above the highest, grand-
 est note
 Of triumph, and of joy and praise, her soft voice
 seems to float;
 And hearing it, straight from His throne
 Comes down to her the Kingly One

With shining face and eyes that hold
Such wealth of love and peace,
She feels her trembling heart grow bold,
Her doubt and grieving cease.
“ Dear Lord!” she cries, and lowly kneels, “ I have
a prayer to make;
O do Thou hear and answer it for Thine own mercy’s
sake,
Since heaven will not seem fair to me
If one dear face I may not see.

“ Dear Christ, a mother’s love is great
To shield, to guide, to watch, to wait.
The last kiss that I gave on earth was to my wayward
son,
Whose soul, though deeply stained by sin, may yet by
love be won
To penitence, to higher walk, to purer, holier way;
O wilt Thou let me to go to him and guard him
night and day?

“ Thou wert a babe in Bethlehem, a mother guarded
Thee.
I pray Thee now, for her dear sake, to hearken unto
me!
Remember how she held Thee close, and crooned Thee,
sweet and low,
The lullabies that mothers sang long centuries ago,
And bared her snowy breast to Thee,
And stroked Thy forehead tenderly.

“And kissed Thee oft, and told herself, again and yet again,
To hold Thee thus one hour outweighed the travail
and the pain!
Dear Christ, this city is most fair; its glories thrill
and move;
O doth it grieve Thee that my heart cleaves to an
earthly love?
That on mine eyes heaven’s beauties dim
Because my heart is back with him?

“With him—the wandering son of mine, the way-ward one— whose need
Of patient love and guiding hand is very great indeed!
Think not I love Thee not, dear Lord, nor long for
heaven’s rest;
’Tis only that the mother-heart throbs fiercely in my
breast.
On this glad morning of Thy birth,
O grant me leave to visit earth!”

Lo! on her head she feels the touch of tender wounded
hand,
“Fear not,” she hears, “a love like thine the Christ
can understand.
No mother prays in vain to Me on this day of the year,
For when the faltering words she speaks fall on My
waiting ear,
I do remember that My cheek
Lay on a bosom warm,
I do remember Bethlehem,
And Mary’s cradling arm.”

LOVE'S LESSON.

ONE lesson let us bear in mind—
Be very gentle with our own,
Be to their faults a little blind,
Nor wound them by a look or tone.

Put self behind! turn tender eyes;
Keep back the words that hurt and sting;
We learn, when sorrow makes us wise,
Forbearance is the grandest thing.

Be patient lest some day we turn
Our eyes on loved one fast asleep,
And whisper, as we lean and yearn,
“How often I have made you weep!

“Some loved you not and words let fall
That must have pierced your gentle breast,
But I, who loved you best of all,
Hurt you far more than all the rest.”

One lesson let us keep in mind—
To hold our dear ones close and fast,
Since loyal hearts are hard to find,
And life and love so soon are past.

IMMORTALITY.

THE fluttering leaves above his grave,
 The grasses creeping toward the light,
 The flowers fragile, sweet, and brave,
 That hide the earth clods from our sight,

The swelling buds on shrub and tree,
 The golden gleam of daffodil,
 The violet blooming fair and free
 Where late the winds blew harsh and chill,

The lily lifting up its breath
 Where snowdrifts spread but yesterday—
 All cry: "Where is thy sting, O death?
 O grave, where is thy victory?"

Each Eastertide the old world sings
 Her anthem sweet and true and strong,
 And all the tender growing things
 Join in her resurrection song.

AUGUST.

GOD in His own right hand doth take each day—
 Each sun-filled day—each rare and radiant night,
 And drop it softly on the earth and say:
 "Touch earth with heaven's own beauty and
 delight."

A SONG OF HARVEST HOME.

PRAISE God for blessings great and small,
For garden bloom and orchard store,
The crimson vine upon the wall,
The green and gold of maples tall,
For harvest-field and threshing-floor!

Praise God for children's laughter shrill,
For clinging hands and tender eyes,
For looks that lift and words that thrill,
For friends that love through good and ill,
For home, and all home's tender ties!

Praise God for losses and for gain,
For tears to shed, and songs to sing,
For gleams of gold and mists of rain,
For the year's full joy, the year's deep pain,
The grieving and the comforting!

THE USURER.

FATE says, and flaunts her stores of gold,
 "I'll loan you happiness untold.
 What is it you desire of me?"
 A perfect hour in which to be
 In love with life, and glad, and good,
 The bliss of being understood,
 Amid life's cares a little space
 To feast your eyes upon a face,
 The whispered word, the love-filled tone,
 The warmth of lips that meet your own,
 To-day of Fate you borrow;
 In hunger of the heart, and pain,
 In loneliness, and longing vain,
 You pay the debt to-morrow!

Prince, let grim Fate take what she will
 Of treasures rare, of joys that thrill,
 Enact the cruel usurer's part,
 Leave empty arms and hungry heart,
 Take what she can of love and trust,
 Take all life's gladness, if she must,
 Take meeting smile and parting kiss—
 The benediction and the bliss.

What then? The fairest thing of all
 Is ours, O Prince, beyond recall—
 Not even Fate would dare to seize
 Our store of golden memories.

MIRACLES.

LOVE met a worldling on the way,
 And softly crept into his breast.
 Straight Self and Greed refused to stay
 Where Love had dared to make his nest.

Love met a mourner on the road,
 And said: "I'll bear thee company."
 Full soon the mourner lost his load
 Of grief, and care, and misery.

Into a grim and cheerless home
 Love forced his way through barriers tall;
 Fled wretchedness, and chill, and gloom—
 The golden sunshine flooded all.

PEACE.

UNBROKEN peace, I ween, is sweeter far
 Than reconciliation. Love's red scar,
 Though salved with kiss of penitence, and tears,
 Remains, full oft, unhealed through all the years.

LIFE'S GRANDEST THINGS.

WHAT is the greatest work of all?
 The work that comes every day;
 The work that waits us on ev'ry hand
 Is work that, for us, is truly grand,
 And the love of work is our pay.

What is the highest life of all?
 It is living, day by day,
 True to ourselves and true to the right,
 Living the truth from dawn till the night,
 And the love of truth for our pay.

What is the grandest thing of all—
 Is it winning Heaven some day?
 No, and a thousand times say no;
 'Tis making this old world thrill and glow
 With the sun of love till each shall know
 Something of Heaven here below,
 And God's *well done* for our pay.

STRENGTH.

WRITE on Life's tablet all things tender, great and
 good,
 Uncaring that full oft thou art misunderstood.
 Interpretation true is foreign to the throng
 That runs and reads; heed not its praise or blame.
 Be strong!
 Write on with steady hand, and, smiling, say, "'Tis
 well!"
 If when thy deeds spell *Heaven*
 The rabble read out *Hell*.

THE TIME AND THE DEED.

Art going to do a kindly deed?
 'Tis never too soon to begin;
 Make haste, make haste, for the moments speed,
 The world, my dear one, has pressing need
 Of your tender thought and kindly deed.
 'Tis never too soon to begin.

But if the deed be a selfish one,
 'Tis ever too soon to begin;
 If some heart will be sorer when all is done,
 Put it off! put it off from sun to sun,
 Remembering always, my own dear one,
 'Tis ever too soon to begin.

DISCONTENT.

MY soul spoke low to Discontent:
Long hast thou lodged with me,
Now, ere the strength of me is spent,
I would be quit of thee.

Thy presence means revolt, unrest,
Means labor, longing, pain;
Go, leave me, thou unwelcome guest,
Nor trouble me again.

I longed for peace—for peace I cried;
You would not let her in;
No room was there for aught beside
The turmoil and the din.

I longed for rest, prayed life might yield
Soft joy and dear delight;
You urged me to the battlefield,
And flung me in the fight.

We two part company to-day.
Now, ere my strength be spent,
I open wide my doors and say:
“ Begone, thou Discontent!”

Then something strong and sweet and fair
Rose up and made reply:
Who gave you the desire to dare
And do the right? ’Twas I.

The coward soul craves pleasant things,
Soft joys and dear delights—
I scourged you till you spread your wings
And soared to nobler heights.

You know me but imperfectly--
My surname is Divine;
God’s own right hand did prison me
Within this soul of thine,

Lest thou, forgetting work and strife,
By human longings prest,
Shouldst miss the grandest things of life,
Its battles and unrest.

A PRAYER OF LOVE.

A PRAYER of love, O Father!
A fair and flowery way
Life stretches out before these
On this their marriage day.
O pour Thy choicest blessing,
Withhold no gift of Thine,
Fill all their world with beauty
And tenderness divine!

A prayer of love, O Father!
This holy love and pure,
That thrills the soul to rapture,
O may it e'er endure!
The richest of earth's treasures,
The gold without alloy,
The flower of faith unfading,
The full, the perfect joy!

No mist of tears or doubting,
But in their steadfast eyes
The light divine, the light of love,
The light of Paradise.
A prayer of love, O Father!
A prayer of love to Thee,
God's best be theirs for life, for death,
And all Eternity!

WILD STRAWBERRIES.

THE glad, glad days, and the pleasant ways—
Ho! for the fields and the wildwood!
The scents, the sights, and the dear delights—
Ho! for our care-free childhood!

Heavy the air with a fragrance rare,
Strawberries ripe in the meadow,
Lucious and red where the vines are spread
Thickly in sun and shadow.

The glad, glad days, and the pleasant ways,
Chorus of wild birds calling:
“Strawberry ripe! Ho! strawberry ripe!”
From dawn till the dew is falling.

SPRING.

O THE frozen valley and frozen hill make a coffin wide
and deep,
And the dead river lies, all its laughter stilled within
it, fast asleep.

The trees that have played with the merry thing, and
freighted its breast with leaves,
Give never a murmur or sigh of woe—they are dead
—no dead thing grieves.

No carol of love from a song-bird's throat; the world
lies naked and still,
For all things tender, and all things sweet, have been
touched by the gruesome chill.

Not a flower—a blue forget-me-not, a wild rose, or
jasmine soft—
To lay its bloom on the dead river's lips, that have
kissed them all so oft.

But look! a ladder is spanning the space 'twixt earth
and the sky beyond,
A ladder of gold for the Maid of Grace—the strong,
the subtle, the fond!

Spring, with the warmth in her footsteps light, and
the breeze and the fragrant breath,
Is coming to press her radiant face to that which is
cold in death.

Spring, with a mantle made of the gold held close in
a sunbeam's heart
Thrown over her shoulders bonnie and bare—see the
sap in the great trees start!

Where the hem of this flowing garment trails, see the
glow, the color bright,
A stirring and spreading of something fair—the
dawn is chasing the night!

Spring, with all love and all dear delights pulsing in
every vein,
The old earth knows her, and thrills to her touch, as
she claims her own again.

Spring, with the hyacinths filling her lap and violet
seeds in her hair,
With the crocus hiding its satin head in her bosom
warm and fair;

Spring, with the daffodils at her feet and pansies
 abloom in her eyes,
Spring, with enough of God in herself to make the
 dead to arise!

For see, as she bends o'er the coffin deep—the frozen
 valley and hill—
The dead river stirs,—ah, that ling'ring kiss is making
 its heart to thrill!

And then as she closer and closer leans, it slips from
 its snowy shroud,
Frightened a moment, then rushing away, calling and
 laughing aloud!

The hill where she rested is all abloom, the wood is
 green as of old,
And wakened birds are striving to send their songs
 to the Gates of Gold.

MADAM GRUNDY.

MADAM, they say, has lost her way.
 Tell me, has she passed thither?
Let her alone and she'll come home,
 And bring her *tales* all with her.

THE SPLENDOR OF THE DAYS.

SWEET and shrill the crickets hiding in the grasses
brown and lean

Pipe their gladness—sweeter, shriller—one would
think the world was green.

O the haze is on the hilltops, and the haze is on the
lake!

See it fleeing through the valley with the bold wind
in its wake!

Mark the warm October haze!

Mark the splendor of the days!

And the mingling of the crimson with the sombre
brown and grays!

See the bare hills turn their furrows to the shine and
to the glow;

If you listen you can hear it, hear a murmur soft and
low—

“ We are naked,” so the fields say, “ stripped of all
our golden dress.”

“ Heed it not,” October answers, “ for I love ye none
the less.

Share my beauty and my cheer
While we rest together here,
In these sun-filled days of languor, in these late days
of the year."

All the splendor of the summer, all the springtime's
light and grace,
All the riches of the harvest, crown her head and
light her face;
And the wind goes sighing, sighing, as if loath to let
her pass,
While the crickets sing exultant in the lean and
withered grass.

O the warm October haze!

O the splendor of the days!

O the mingling of the crimson with the sombre brown
and grays!

GOD'S WARMTH IS SHE.

O GLAD sun, creeping through the casement wide,
A million blossoms have you kissed since morn,
But none so fair as this one at my side—
Touch soft the bit of love, the babe new born.

Towards all the world my love and pity flow,
With high resolves, with trust, with sympathy.
This happy heart of mine is all aglow—
This heart that was so cold—God's warmth is she.

HER PRAYER.

Low in the ivy-covered church she kneeled,
 The sunshine falling on her golden hair;
 The moaning of a soul with hurt unhealed
 Was her low-breathed and broken cry of prayer.

“ Thy wounded hand, dear Christ, Thy wounded
 hand!

I pray Thee, lay it on this heart of mine—
 This heart so sick with grief it cannot stand
 Aught heavier than this tender touch of Thine.

“ Thy wounded hand, dear Christ, O let it press
 Here, where the hurt is hardest, where the pain
 Throbs fiercest, and the utter emptiness
 Mocks at glad memories and longings vain!

“ Thy wounded hand, dear Christ, who long ago
 Slept by Thy mother's side in Bethlehem!
 Think of her cradling arms, her love-song low,
 And pity me when Thou dost think of them.

“ My baby girl, my pretty dear, I miss
Morning and noon and night—her ways so wise,
The patting of her soft, warm hands, the kiss,
The cooing voice, the sunshine of her eyes.

“ I sleep, and dream she nestles close, my own,
Her red mouth on my breast; I wake and cry.
She sleeps out yonder in the dark, alone—
My arms are empty and my bosom dry.

“ Thy wounded hand, dear Christ, will surely
bring
Healing for this great anguish that I bear!
A nursing babe, a little dimpled thing,
God might have left her to her mother's care!

“ Thy wounded hand, dear Christ, O let me feel
Its touch to-day, and past all doubting prove
Thou hast not lost Thine ancient power to heal—
Press out the bitterness, fill up with love!

“ O Babe that in the manger rude did sleep!
O Prince of Peace, Thy tender wounded palm
Still holds the oil of joy for those that weep!
Still holds the comforting, the Gilead's balm!”

DECORATING THE OLD CHURCH.

GRAY old gardener, what do you bring?

“ Laurel and ivy and bay,
With palms for the crowning of a King—
The morrow is Christmas Day.

“ Holly with thorns, and berries like blood
On its shiny greenness flung.
O the piercèd side, and the thorny crown,
And the cross whereon He hung!

“ The mistletoe, meaning All-healing,
Hangs close to the holly’s thorn,
Lest we forget that on Christmas Day
The Healer of Souls was born.

“ Ivy’s for faith; on the altar rail
Let it creep where all may see;
It crept till it kissed a cheek so pale
That night in Gethsemane.

“ Bay’s for remembrance, full and sweet;
It speaks with its fragrant breath
Of manger and cross and a lowly tomb,
And a love that conquered death.

“ And laurel leaves for the wreath I bring,
The laurel for victory,
And palms for the crowning of a King—
The morrow is Christmas Day.”

ENVY.

WHEN Satan sends—to vex the mind of man
And urge him on to meanness and to wrong—
His satellites, there is not one that can
Acquit itself like envy. Not so strong
As lust, so quick as fear, so big as hate—
A pigmy thing, the twin of sordid greed—
Its work all noble things to underrate,
Deery fair face, fair form, fair thought, fair
deed,
A sneer it has for what is highest, best,
For love’s soft voice, and virtue’s robe of white;
Truth is not true, and pity is not kind,
A great task done is but a pastime light.
Tormented and tormenting is the mind
That grants to envy room to make its nest.

THE SONG OF THE BELLS.

HE frowned and shook his snowy head.

“ Those clanging bells! they deafen quite
With their unmeaning song,” he said.

“ I’m weary of it all to-night—

The gladness, sadness. I’m so old

I have no sympathy to spare,
My heart has grown so hard and cold,

So full of self, I do not care
How many laugh, or long, or grieve
In all the world this Christmas eve.

“ There was a time long, long ago—

They take our best, the passing years—
For the old life, and faith, and glow.

I’d give—what’s on my cheek? Not tears!

I have a whim. To-night I’ll spend

Till eyes turn on me gratefully—

An old man’s whim, just to pretend

That he is what he used to be;
For this one night, not want nor pain
Shall look to me for help in vain.”

"A foolish whim!" he muttered oft,
 The while he gave to those in need,
 But strangely warm and strangely soft
 His old face grew, for self and greed
 Slipped from him. Ah, it made him glow
 To hear the blessing, thanks, the prayer.
 He looked into his heart, and lo!
 The old-time faith and love were there.
 "Ring out, old bells, right gladly ring!"
 He said, "Full sweet the song you sing."

QUEBEC.

QUEBEC, the gray old city on the hill,
 Lies, with a golden glory on her head,
 Dreaming throughout this hour so fair, so still,
 Of other days and her belovèd dead.
 The doves are nesting in the cannons grim,
 The flowers bloom where once did run a tide
 Of crimson when the moon rose pale and dim
 Above a field of battle stretching wide.
 Methinks within her wakes a mighty glow
 Of pride in ancient times, her stirring past,
 The strife, the valor of the long ago
 Feels at her heart-strings. Strong and tall,
 and vast
 She lies, touched with the sunset's golden grace,
 A wondrous softness on her gray old face.

MEN O' THE FOREST MARK.

WHAT we most need is men of worth,
Men o' the forest mark,
Of lofty height and mighty girth
And green, unbroken bark.

Not men whom circumstances
Have stunted, wasted, sapped,
Men fearful of fighting chances,
Clinging to by-paths mapped.

Holding honor and truth below
Promotion, place and pelf;
Weaklings that change as winds do blow,
Lost in their love of self.

Tricksters playing a game unfair
(Count them, sirs, at this hour),
Ready to dance to maddest air
Piped by the man in power.

The need, sore need, of this young land
Is honest men, good sirs,
Men as her oak trees tall and grand,
Staunch as her stalwart firs.

Steadfast, unswerving, first and last,
Fearless of front and strong,
Meeting the challenge of the blast
With high, clear battle song.

Not sapless things of the byways,
Lacking in life and strength,
Not shrivelled shrubs of the highways,
Pigmy of breadth and length,

But noblest growth of God's green earth—
Men o' the forest mark,
Of lofty height and giant girth
And green, unbroken bark.

A SONG OF CHEER.

HERE'S a song of cheer
For the whole long year:

We've only to do our best,
Take up our part
With a strong, true heart—
The Lord will do all the rest.

THE FIRSTBORN.

THE harvest sun lay hot and strong
On waving grain and grain in sheaf,
On dusty highway stretched along,
On hill and vale, on stalk and leaf.

The wind which stirred the tasseled corn
Came creeping through the casement wide,
And softly kissed the babe new born
That nestled at its mother's side.

That mother spoke in tones that thrilled:
" My firstborn's cradled in my arm,
Upon my breast his cry is stilled,
And here he lies so dear, so warm."

To her had come a generous share
Of worldly honors and of fame,
Of hours replete with gladness rare,
But no one hour seemed just the same

As that which came when, white and spent
With pain of travail great, she lay,
Thrilled through with rapture and content,
And love and pride, that August day.

The fairest picture of the past—
Life's tenderest page till all is done —
A glad young mother holding fast
God's wondrous gift—her little son.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY.

THERE's an Isle, a green Isle, set in the sea,
Here's to the Saint that blessed it!
And here's to the billows wild and free
That for centuries have caressed it!

Here's to the day when the men that roam
Send longing eyes o'er the water!
Here's to the land that still spells home
To each loyal son and daughter!

Here's to old Ireland—fair, I ween,
With the blue skies stretched above her!
Here's to her shamrock warm and green,
And here's to the hearts that love her!

LESLEY.

FROM the little bald head to the two little feet,
 You are winsome, and bonnie, and tender, and
 sweet,

But not for this do I love you.

You're wilful, cajoling, not fond of restraint,
 A creature of moods—no tiresome saint—
 You're wise and you're wistful, and oh, you are
 quaint,

But not for this do I love you.

You're a rose of a maiden, the pink and the white
 Of your face is to me a rare thing of delight,
 But not for this do I love you.

That " agoo " on your lips is the tenderest thing,
 And the eyes smiling at me, ye bonnie wee thing,
 Are violets washed with the dewdrops of spring,
 But not for this do I love you.

Come, nestle down close on my bosom, you dear,
The secret I'll whisper right into your ear,
Because you are *you* do I love you,

Because you are you, just you, oh, my own,
Because you are Lesley, this reason alone
Will do for us, darling, until you are grown,
Because you are *you* do I love you.

THE TRYST.

THE harvest moon in yellow haze
Is steeping all the sea and land,
Is kindling paths and shining ways
Around the hills, across the sand.

And there are only thou and I—
O sweetheart, I've no eyes to note
The glory of the sea and sky,
I see a softly rounded throat,

A face uplifted, pure and sweet,
Two blue eyes filled with trust and love;
Enough, the sea sings at our feet,
The harvest moon sails just above.

A GOOD WOMAN.

HER eyes are the windows of a soul
Where only the white thoughts spring,
And they look, as the eyes of the angels look,
For the good in everything.

Her lips can whisper the tenderest words
That weary and worn can hear,
Can tell of the dawn of a better morn
Till only the cowards fear.

Her hands can lift up the fallen one
From an overthrow complete,
Can take a soul from the mire of sin
And lead it to Christ's dear feet.

And she can walk wherever she will—
She walketh never alone.
The work she does is the Master's work,
And God guards well His own.

DESPAIR.

WE catch a glimpse of it, gaunt and gray,
When the golden sunbeams are all abroad;
We sober a moment, then softly say:
The world still lies in the hand of God.

We watch it stealthily creeping o'er
The threshold leading to somebody's soul;
A shadow, we cry, it cannot be more
When faith is one's portion and Heaven one's
goal.

A ghost that comes stealing its way along,
Affrighting the weak with its gruesome air,
But who that is young and glad and strong
Fears for a moment to meet Despair?

To this heart of ours we have thought so bold
All uninvited it comes one day—
Lo! faith grows wan, and love grows cold,
And the heaven of our dreams lies far away.

OUR DEAD IN SOUTH AFRICA.

DAY of battle and day of blood
Found you steady and strong, I ween;
Sons of the land of the Maple Leaf,
Face to the foe, you died for the Queen.

Brave boys, our boys, filling to-day
Nameless graves upon veldt and plain,
Here's to your mem'ry gallant and true,
Sons of our soil, who thought it gain

To fight and win, or to fight and fall!
Strong of purpose, you took your stand,
Proved with your life-blood red and warm
Canada's faith in the Motherland!

Brave boys, our boys, this have you done,
Drawn us closer, and bound us fast;
One are we with the Isle in the sea,
One in the future, the present, the past.

Brave boys, our boys, honor we owe,
Honor and homage a mighty debt—
You proved our love and our loyalty—
The land that bore you will not forget!
Canada's soldiers, Canada's sons,
The land that bore you will not forget!

THE BARLEY FIELDS.

THE sunset has faded, there's but a tinge,
Saffron pale, where a star of white
Has tangled itself in the trailing fringe
Of the pearl-gray robe of the summer night.

O the green of the barley fields grows deep,
The breath of the barley fields grows rare;
There is rustle and glimmer, sway and sweep—
The wind is holding high revel there,

Singing the song it has often sung—
Hark to the troubadour glad and bold:
"Sweet is the earth when the summer is young
And the barley fields are green and gold!"

THE IMPRISONED LARK.

DID you send your song to the gates of gold
In the days of long ago?
A song of sweetness and gladness untold,
Till fain was my lady to have and to hold—
Ah! my lady did not know.

'Tis love and joy make the soul of a song,
If we only understood.
Can each strain be tender, and true, and strong,
When the days stretch out so weary and long,
Dear little bird of the wood?

The sun came so boldly into your cell—
'Tis the springtime, pretty bird—
And full sweet the story he had to tell
Of doings in meadow and wood and dell,
Till your longing grew and stirred.

This cage of my lady's has silver bars,
And my lady's voice is mild,
But oh, to sail 'twixt the earth and stars,
Forget the hurt of the prison bars
In the gladness of freedom wild!

To soar and circle o'er shadowy glade
Where dewdrops hide from the sun!
O fields where the blossoming clover swayed!
O voices familiar that music made
Till the full, glad day was done!

Ah, then you sang, little bird of the wood,
And you stilled the laughing throng.
To make passionate longing understood
You took the height and depth of your mood
And flung them into a song!

These guests of my lady's did listen, I know,
When out through the silver bars
You sent forth a measure, liquid and low
As laughter of waters that ebb and flow
Under the shimmering stars.

You sang of the sweetest, gladdest, and best
Your longing heart held in store,
Till into the careless listener's breast
There flashed a sudden and vague unrest,
That grew into something more.

Eyes saw for a few brief moments' space
The heights that were never trod,
And, seeing, grew dim for the swift, bold race
That was planned in the hours when youth
and grace
Came fresh from the hand of God.

Only a homesick bird of the field
Trilling a glorious note!
Only a homesick bird of the wood
With heaven in your full throat!

WOMAN.

Not faultless, for she was not fashioned so,
A mingling of the bitter and the sweet;
Lips that can laugh and sigh and whisper low
Of hope and trust and happiness complete,
Or speak harsh truths; eyes that can flash with fire,
Or make themselves but wells of tenderness
Wherein is drowned all bitterness and ire—
Warm eyes whose lightest glance is a caress.
Heaven sent her here to brighten this old earth,
And only heaven fully knows her worth.

THE MULLEIN MEADOW.

DOWN in the mullein meadow
The lusty thistle springs,
The butterflies go criss-cross,
The lonesome catbird sings,

The alderbush is flaunting
Her blossoms white as snow—
The same old mullein meadow
We played in long ago.

The waste land of the homestead,
The arid sandy spot,
Where reaper's song is never heard,
Where wealth is never sought,

But where the sunshine lingers,
And merry breezes come
To gather pungent perfumes
From the mullein-stalks abloom.

There's a playground on the hillside,
A playhouse in the glade,
With mulleins for a garden,
And mulleins for a shade.

And still the farmer grumbles
That nothing good will grow
In this old mullein meadow
We played in long ago!

LIVING FRESHNESS.

O FRESHNESS, living freshness of a day
In June! Spring scarce has gotten out of sight,
And not a stain of wear shows on the grass
Beneath our feet, and not a dead leaf calls,
“ Our day of loveliness is past and gone!”
I found the thick wood steeped in pleasant smells,
The dainty ferns hid in their sheltered nooks;
The wild-flowers found the sunlight where they
stood,
And some hid their white faces quite away,
While others lifted up their starry eyes
And seemed right glad to ruffle in the breeze.

LIFE'S DAY.

“ LIFE’s day is too brief,” he said at dawn,
 “ I would it were ten times longer,
 For great tasks wait for me further on.”
 At noonday the wish was stronger.

His place was in the thick of the strife,
 And hopes were nearing completeness,
 While one was crowning the joys of life
 With love’s own wonderful sweetness.

“ Life’s day is too brief for all it contains,
 The triumphs, the fighting, the proving,
 The hopes and desires, the joys and the pains—
 Too brief for the hating and loving.”

To-night he sits in the shadows gray,
 While heavily sorrow presses.
 O the long, long day! O the weary day,
 With its failures and successes!

He sits in the shadows and turns his eyes
On the years that lie behind him.

“ I am tired of all things now,” he cries,
And the hot tears rise and blind him.

“ Rest and stillness is all that I crave,
Such robbing of strength has grief done.
Make room, dear love, in your lowly grave—
Life’s day, thank God, is a brief one!”

MORNING.

THE eastern sky grew all aglow,
A tinted fleet sailed just below.

The thick wood and the clinging mist
Slow parted, wept good-bye, and kissed.

To primrose, tulip, daffodil,
The wind came piping gay and shrill:

“ Wake up! wake up! while day is new,
And all the world is washed with dew!”

GRACE.

(JUNE 13, 1899.)

So STILL you sleep upon your bed,
So motionless and slender,
It cannot be that you are dead,
My maiden gay and tender!

You were no creature pale and meek
That death should hasten after,
The dimples played within your cheek,
Your lips were made for laughter.

To you the great world was a place
That care might never stay in,
A playground built by God's good grace
For glad young folks to play in.

You made your footpath by life's flowers,
O happy, care-free maiden!
The sky was full of shine and showers,
The wind was perfume laden.

Your dimpled hands are folded now
Upon your snowy bosom,
The dark hair nestles on your brow—
O tender, broken blossom!

The white lids hide your eyes so clear,
So mirthful, so beguiling,
But as my tears fall on you, dear,
Your lips seem softly smiling.

And do you feel that it is home,
The city far above us?
And were they glad to have you come?
And will you cease to love us?

Methinks when you stand all in white
To learn each sweet new duty,
Some eye will note, with keen delight,
Your radiance and beauty.

And when your laughter softly rings
Out where God's streets do glisten,
The angels fair will fold their wings
And still their song to listen.

THE WAY TO DREAMLAND.

WITH an angel flower-laden, every day a dimpled
maiden

Sails away from off my bosom on a radiant sea of
bliss;

I can see her drifting, drifting, hear the snowy wings
uplifting

As he woos her into Dreamland with a kiss.

Blissful hour, my pretty sleeper, guarded by an angel
keeper,

List'ning to the words he brings thee from a fairer
world than this;

Sweet! thy heart he is beguiling, I can tell it by thy
smiling,

As he woos thee into Dreamland with a kiss.

Could there come to weary mortals such a glimpse
through golden portals,

Would we not drift on forever toward the longed-for
land of peace,

Would we not leave joys and sorrows,

Glad to-days and sad to-morrows,

For the sound of white wings lifting, and the kiss?

HER MISSION.

SHE is so winsome and so wise
 She sways me at her will,
 And oft the question will arise,
 What mission does she fill?
 O then I say with pride untold,
 And love beyond degree,
 This woman with the heart of gold,
 She just keeps house for me—
 For me,
 She just keeps house for me!

A full content dwells on her face,
 She's quite in love with life,
 And for a title wears with grace
 The sweet old-fashioned "wife."
 Our children climb upon her knee,
 And nestle on her breast,
 And ah! her mission seems to me
 The grandest and the best.

O then I say with pride untold,
 And love beyond degree,
 This woman with the heart of gold,
 She just keeps house for me—
 For me,
 She just keeps house for me!

FRIEND OR FOE?

THERE'S a man I know—
 A likeable man—
 Whom you meanly wound
 Whenever you can,
 Remark with malice
 His task is done ill,
 He's poor of judgment
 And weak of will.
 I implore you, now,
 As that poor man's friend,
 Let persecution
 Have speediest end.

Cease taunting the man
 With blunders he makes,
 Cease harping alway
 On wrongs and mistakes.
 Come, be his good friend—
 Hail fellow, well met—

His failures forgive,
And his faults forget.
Who is the man you've
Discouraged and blamed?
The man is *yourself*—
Are you not ashamed?

For faults of the past
Make ample amends,
And you and yourself
Be the best of friends.

THE HIGHLAND SHEPHERD.

O THE hills of purple heather,
And the skies so warm and gray!
O the shimmer of the sea-mist
In the sea-wind far away!
O the calling of the torrent,
Sweeping down Ben Vorlich's side,
And my white flocks faring foldward
In the hush of eventide!

CHRISTMAS CONVERSION.

I CAN see her in the kitchen,
Apron on and sleeves rolled up,
Measurin' spices in a teaspoon,
Figs and raisins in a cup.

Now she's throwin' apple quarters
In that wooden bowl of hers,
'Long with lemon peel and orange,
An' she stirs, an' stirs, an' stirs.

Then she takes her knife an' chops it,
Chops so fast her hand jest flies.
Now I know what ma is up to—
Makin' mincemeat for the pies.

I smell Christmas in our kitchen,
An' my heart gets big an' glad,
An' I, somehow, fall to wishin'
That I wasn't quite so bad.

An' I tell myself I'll never
 Cheat at marbles any more,
Nor make faces at my teacher,
 Nor hang round the corner store

'Stead of goin' on my errands;
 Never touch the cookie pail,
Nor play hooky an' go skatin',
 Nor tie cans on Rover's tail;

Never let ma think it's spellings
 When it's only Robin Hood.
With the gladness comes the wishin'
 To be, oh, just awful good!

'Bout this time of year it takes me—
 Pa, he doesn't understand,
Always says: "You sly young codger,
 You know Christmas is at hand."

But it isn't that, it's something—
 Can't explain it very well—
Takes me when ma fills the kitchen
 With this juicy Christmas smell.

When she chops the spice an' raisins,
 With the peels an' Northern Spies,
Sleeves rolled up above her elbows,
 Makin' mincemeat for the pies.

A BIT O' SHAMROCK.

WE met her on the hillside green
 Below old Castle Blarney;
 Her name, she whispered, was Eileen,
 Her home it was Killarney.

I see her yet, her Irish eyes
 Blue gray as seas in summer,
 And hear her welcome, on this wise,
 Vouchsafed to each new-comer:

“ I'll guide ye up the stairway steep,
 And naught will ye be missing
 O' battlement or donjon keep,
 Or blarney stone for kissing.

“ The tower that was McCarthy's pride,
 The scene o' battles thrilling,
 And where the Desmond kept his bride—
 Me fee is but a shilling.

“ Here’s for ye, now, a keepsake charm ”—
Her low tones grow caressing—
“ A bit o’ shamrock green and warm,
To bring ye luck and blessing.”

The “ keepsake charm ”—I have it yet —
A thing of guile and blarney;
Each green leaf dares me to forget
Fair Eileen o’ Killarney.

SLANDER.

HE does the devil’s basest work, no less,
Who deals in calumnies—who throws the mire
On snowy robes whose hem he dare not press
His foul lips to. The pity of it! Liar,
Yet half believed by such as deem the good
Or evil but the outcome of a mood.
That one who, with the breath lent him by Heaven,
Speaks words that on some white soul do reflect,
Is lost to decency, and should be driven
Outside the pale of honest men’s respect.
O slanderer, hell’s imps must say of you:
“ He does the work we are ashamed to do!”

ARCHIBALD LAMPMAN.

“ Poet by the grace of God.”

You sing of winter gray and chill,
Of silent stream and frozen lake,
Of naked woods, and winds that wake
To shriek and sob o'er vale and hill.

And straight we breathe the bracing air,
And see stretched out before our eyes
A white world spanned by brooding skies,
And snowflakes drifting everywhere.

You sing of tender things and sweet,
Of field, of brook, of flower, of bush,
The lilt of bird, the sunset flush,
The scarlet poppies in the wheat.

Until we feel the gleam and glow
Of summer pulsing through our veins,
And hear the patter of the rains,
And watch the green things sprout and grow.

You sing of joy, and we do mark
How glad a thing is life, and dear;
Of sorrow, and we seem to hear
The sound of sobbing in the dark.

The subtle power to sway and move,
The stamp of genius strong and true,
This, friend, was heaven's gift to you,
This made you great and won you love.

Your song goes ringing clear and sweet—
Though on earth's bosom, bare and brown,
All willingly you laid you down,
The music is not incomplete.

Sleep on, it is not by the years
We measure life when all is done;
Your rest is earned, your laurels won;
Sleep, softly sleep, we say with tears.

A HINT.

AMONG the vivid green I see
A yellow leaf,
And yonder in the basswood tree
An empty nest swings lonesomely—
The wheat's in sheaf.

CHRYSANTHEMUM'S COURT.

THEY lift their faces to the light,
 And aye they are a gallant band;
 The queen of all is snowy white—
 A stately thing, and tall and grand.

See, close beside, in yellow drest,
 Is the prince consort of the hour;
 A bit of God's own sunshine prest
 Into a glorious golden flower!

And mark the courtiers' noble grace—
 Gay courtiers these, in raiment fine—
 Their satin doublets slashed with lace,
 Their velvet cloaks as red as wine.

Each maid-in-waiting is most fair—
 Note well the graces she unfurls—
 The winds have tossed her fluffy hair,
 And left it in a thousand curls.

And yonder quaint, old-fashioned one,
 Arrayed in palest lavender,
Ah! few there are, when all is done,
 In beauty can compare with her.

The pink—I've seen at eventide
 A something very like to this,
A cloud adrift upon the sky,
 All rosy from the sun's last kiss.

Without the court, the chill and gloom
 Of autumn twilight o'er the land;
Within, the grandeur and the bloom
 Of queen, of prince, and courtiers grand.

HER LITTLE WAY.

'Tis woman rules the whole world still,
 Though faults the critics say she has;
She smiles her smile and works her will—
 'Tis just a little way she has.

THE CRITICISM.

THE great man came to the country place,
 To preach to farmers sturdy;
 He said: "I'm in my happiest vein,
 I'll be eloquent and wordy.

"Not often a great man like myself
 Comes here to do the teaching—
 A big event in these quiet lives—
 They'll not forget my preaching."

The great man found him a text at length
 In Ezekiel's ponderous pages;
 From point to point of his sermon long
 He travelled at easy stages.

He soared up high in the realms of thought,
 Was rich in allegory.
 "I have," said he, as he sat him down,
 "Covered myself with glory.

“ These simple rustics are overcome
With my rhetoric and power,
They’re used to a sprinkling of thought
And I’ve given them a shower.”

The great man got a terrible shock
As, the long service over,
He walked with a farmer grave and staid
Home through the fields of clover.

“ Your people—ah—were they much
impressed
With my sermon?” he queried.
“ Preaching with earnestness, power and force
Has left me sadly wearied.”

“ A worse would a done us country folks ”—
The farmer’s tone a terse one—
“ That is,” reflectively, “ if you
Happened to have a worse one.”

JESSIE.

You miss the touch of her dear hand,
Her laughter gay and sweet,
The dimpled cheek, the sunny smile,
The patter of her feet.

The loving glances she bestowed,
The tender tales she told—
The world, since she has gone away,
Seems empty, drear and cold.

Dear, oft you prayed that God would give
Your darling joy and grace,
That pain or loss might never dim
The brightness of her face.

That her young heart might keep its trust,
Its purity so white,
Its wealth of sweet unselfishness,
Her eyes their radiant light,

Her fair, soft face its innocence
Of every guile and wrong,
And nothing touch to mar the joy
And gladness of her song.

God heard the prayer; His answer came—
Now, cease thy murmuring, cease—
“Come, little one, come home,” He said,
“Unto the Land of Peace!”

You sheltered her upon your breast,
The child so quaint and wise,
To-day, where sorrow is unknown,
She walks in paradise.

Her eyes have learned the mystery,
Her feet the vale have crost,
But, friend of mine, you'll find again
The treasure you have lost.

Your arms will surely clasp once more
The little fair-haired girl
Who waits for you within the gates
Of jasper and of pearl.

POYNINGS.

Do you remember that June day among
The hills, the high, far-reaching Sussex hills?
Above, the straggling flocks of fleecy clouds
That skipped and chased each other merrily
In God's warm pasturage, the azure sky;
Below, the hills that stretched their mighty heads
As though they fain would neighbor with that sky.
Deep, vivid green, save where the flocks showed
white;

The wise ewes hiding from the glow of noon
In shady spots, the short-wooled lambs at play,
And over all the stillness of the hills,
The sweet and solemn stillness of the hills.

The shepherds gave us just such looks of mild
Surprise as did the sheep they shepherded.
"Ye are not of the hills," so said the looks,
"Not of our kind, but strangers come from out

The busy, bustling world to taste the sweets
Of silence and of peace. We wish you well.”
In eager quest of what the hills might hide,
Some valley of content, some spring of youth,
Some deep, enchanted dell filled to the brim
With subtle mysteries, allurements rare,
We followed down a path, a little crooked,
Wand’ring path that lost itself and found itself
So oft we knew it for the playmate of the stream
That went with us and sang a clamorous song—
A never-ending song of flock and fold
Of sea-mist and of sun—until at length
We came into a valley warm and wide,
A cradle ’mong the hills. In it there lay
No infant hamlet, but one gray and old
That dozed and dreamed the soft June hours away.

Gardens there were with fragrant wall-flowers filled,
And daffodils, and rhododendrons pale,
And sweet, old-fashioned pinks, phlox, rosemary;
An avenue of elms, with cottages,
And barefoot children sporting on the green.
“ ’Tis Poynings,” said the rustie, “ see, the church
Lies yonder, and the graveyard just beyond;
This path will lead you straight to it.”

Do you remember—rather, will you e’er forget?—
That gray church built, how many centuries
Ago? The worn stone steps, the oaken door,

The crumbling walls, the altar carved,
The stories told by stained-glass windows set
Deep in the walls; the ivy, thick and green,
Which crept and hid the grayness quite from sight.
Within, the smell of roses from the sheaf
Of scarlet bloom before the altar laid,
Close mingled with the mould and must of age;
On wall and floor memorials to the dead,
Who, unafraid, had slumbered there so long.

And then the graveyard out among the trees—
No graveyard, but a garden, flower filled—
Moss roses white as moth wings in the night,
And lilies sorrowful but very sweet,
Low-growing violets in grasses hid,
And rue which spoke of some heart's bitterness.
Old Time had decked the stones with lichens rare,
Rubbed out with careless hand the lettering:
In memory of someone's life and love
Each stood, but whose we might not know.

And while we lingered in the perfumed gloom,
And watched the golden sunshine smite the hills,
An English blackbird straight began a song
So sweet, so high, so shrill, so wondrous clear,
That! listening, our eyes grew dim the while
Our hearts did thrill. Whoe'er has heard the song
An English blackbird carols forth in June
Knows well the power it has, the wondrous charm!

Strangers were we within the gates, and so
He gave us welcome, clearer, warmer still,
A welcome to the beauty and the bloom,
The silence of the churchyard old and gray,
A welcome to the grasses and the brook,
The shade of feathery elm trees, and the glow
Of sunlight quivering golden on the sward,
A welcome to the valley dim, and to
The hills, the high, far-reaching Sussex hills.

SONG OF THE GOLDEN SEA.

SING, ye ripening fields of wheat,
Sing to the breezes passing by,
Sing your jubilant song and sweet,
Sing to the earth, the air, the sky!

Earth that held thee and skies that kissed
Morning and noon and night for long,
Sun and rain and dew and mist,
All that has made you glad and strong.

The harvest fields of the far, far west
Stretch out a shimmering sea of gold!
Every ripple upon its breast
Sings peace, and plenty, and wealth
untold!

Far as the eye can reach it goes,
Farther yet, 'till there seems no end,
Under a sky where blue and rose
With the gold and turquoise softly blend.

Here, where sweep the prairies lone,
Broad and beautiful in God's eyes,
Here in this young land, all our own,
The garner-house of the old world lies.

DAWN.

I CANNOT echo the old wish to die at morn, as darkness
strays!

We have been glad together greeting some new-born
radiant days,

The earth would hold me, every day familiar things
Would weigh me fast,

The stir, the touch of morn, the bird that on swift
wings

Goes flitting past.

Some flower would lift to me its tender tear-wet face,
and send its breath

To whisper of the earth, its beauty and its grace,
And combat death.

It would be light, and I would see in thy dear eyes
The sorrow grow.

Love, could I lift my own, undimmed, to paradise
And leave thee so!

A thousand cords would hold me down to this low
sphere,

When thou didst grieve;

Ah! should death come upon morn's rosy breast, I
fear

I'd crave reprieve.

But when, her gold all spent, the sad day takes her
flight,

When shadows creep,

Then just to put my hand in thine and say, " Good-
night,"

And fall asleep.

THE CRICKET.

O THE gayest of musicians! O the gladdest thing on
 earth,
 With its piping and its chirping, is the cricket on
 the hearth!
 There is magic in the music that he flings us with such
 zest:
 "Love's the only wealth that's lasting—who cares
 aught for all the rest?
 Never mind though ill-luck dog you, never mind
 though times are hard,
 Have you not the wife and bairns?" chirps the sweet,
 insistent bard—
 Chirps and chirps, until you heed him, till your heart
 is all aglow—
 "Love's the only wealth that's lasting, home's a bit
 of heaven below."
 O the gayest of musicians! O the gladdest thing on
 earth,
 With his piping and his chirping, is the cricket on
 the hearth!

EARTH TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

You cannot take from out my heart the growing,
 The green, sweet growing, and the vivid thrill.
 "O Earth," you cry, "you should be old, not
 glowing
 With youth and all youth's strength and beauty
 still!"

Old, and the new hopes stirring in my bosom!
 Old, and my children drawing life from me!
 Old, in my womb the tender bud and blossom!
 Old, steeped in richness and fertility!

Old, while the growing things call to each other,
 In language I alone can understand:
 "How she doth nourish us, this wondrous mother
 Who is so beautiful and strong and grand!"

Old, while the wild things of the forest hide them
 In my gray coverts, which no eye can trace!
 Hunted or hurt, 'tis my task to provide them
 Healing and soothing and a hiding place.

And then, my human children, could you listen
 To secrets whispered in the stillness deep
 Of noonday, or when night-dews fall and glisten—
 'Tis on my bosom that men laugh and weep.

Some tell me moving tales of love and passion,
 Of gladness all too great to be pent in—
 The sweet, old theme which does not change its
 fashion—
 Another cries out brokenly of sin.

While others filled with sorrow, fain to share it,
 Hide tear-wet faces on my soft brown breast,
 Sobbing: "Dear Mother Earth, we cannot bear it,
 Grim death has stolen all that we loved best!"

The old familiar cry of loss and sorrow
 I hear to-day—I heard it yesterday—
 Ay, and will hear in every glad to-morrow
 That ye may bring to me, O Century.

I answer mourner, penitent, and lover,
 With quick'ning stir, with bud and leaf and sap:
 "Peace, peace," I say, "when life's brief day is
 over
 Ye shall sleep soundly in your mother's lap."

The loss, the longing of mankind I'm sharing,
 The hopes, the joys, the laughter and the tears,
 And yet you think I should be old, uncaring,
 The barren, worn-out plaything of the years!

Past centuries have not trodden out my greenness

With all their marches, as you well can see,

Nor will you bring me withered age or leanness.

March on—what are your hundred years to me

While life and growth within me glow and flourish,

While in the sunshine and the falling rain

I, the great Mother, do bring forth and nourish

The springtime blossom and the harvest grain?

March on, O Century, I am safe holden

In God's right hand, the garner-house of truth—

The hand that holds the treasure rare and golden

Of life, and sweetness, and eternal youth!

THAIL BURN.

THE river is a ribbon wide,
 The falls a snowy feather,
 And stretching far on ilka side
 Are hills abloom wi' heather.
 The wind comes loitering frae the west
 By weight o' sweets retarded;
 The sea-mist hangs on Arran's crest,
 A Golden Fleece unguarded.

We ken ye weel, ye fond young pair,
 That hand in hand do tarry;
 The youth is Burns, the Bard o' Ayr,
 The lass is Highland Mary.
 He tells her they will never pairt—
 'Tis life and luve taegither—
 The world has got the song by hairt
 He sang among the heather.

'Twas lang ago, lang, lang ago,
 Yet all remember dearly
 The eyes, the hair, the brow o' snow
 O' her he luved sae dearly.
 And lads still woo their lassies dear,
 I' cot and hall and dairy,
 By words he whispered i' the ear
 O' his ain Highland Mary.

THE LAKE SHORE ROAD.

'Tis noon, the meadow stretches in the sun,
 And every little spear of grass uplifts its slimness
 to the glow
 To let the heavy-laden bees pass out.

A stream comes at a snail's pace through the gloom
 Of shrub and fern and brake,
 Leaps o'er a wall, goes singing on to find
 The coolness of the lake.

A wild rose spreads her greenness on a hedge,
 And flings her tinted blossoms in the air;
 The sweetbriar neighbors with that porcupine
 Of shrubs, the gooseberry; with parasol
 Of white the elderberry shades her head
 And dreams of purple fruit and wine-press chill.

From off her four warm eggs of mottled shade
 A bird flies with a call of love and joy
 That wins an answer straight
 From that brown thing of gladness on a bough,
 Too slight to hold him and his weight of song,
 The proud and watchful mate.

The wind comes heavy freighted from the wood,
 With jasmine, honeysuckle, iris, phlox,
 And lilies red and white;
 The blue lake murmurs, and the world seems all
 A garden of delight.

MAGDALENE.

A WOMAN in her youth, but lost to all
 The joys of innocence. Love she had known,
 Such love as leaves the soul filled full of shame.
 Passion was hers, hate and impurity,
 The gnawing of remorse, the longing vain
 To lose the mark of sin, the scarlet flush
 Of fallen womanhood, the envy of
 The spotless, the desire that they might sink
 Low in the mire as she.

Oh, what a soul
 She carried on that day! The women drew
 Their robes back from her touch, men leered,
 And children seemed afraid to meet
 The devilish beauty of her form and face.
 Shunned and alone,
 Till One came to her side,
 And spake her name, and took her hand in His.

And what He said
 Is past the telling. There are things the heart
 Knows well, but cannot blazon to the world;
 And when He went His way,
 Upon her brow, where shame had lain,
 Was set the one sweet word:

Forgiveness.

MY LADY NIGHTINGALE.

I HEARD you singing in the grove,
My Lady Nightingale;
The thirsty leaves were drinking dew,
And all the sky was pale.

A silence—clear as bells of peace
Your song thrilled on the air,
Each liquid note a thing of joy,
And sweet beyond compare.

Not all of joy—a haunting strain
Of sorrow and of tears,
A note of grief which seemed to voice
The sadness of the years.

'Twas pure, 'twas clear, 'twas wondrous sweet,
My Lady Nightingale,
Yet subtly sad, the song you sang
When all the sky was pale.

THE ORCHARD.

THERE'S no garden like an orchard,
 Nature shows no fairer thing
 Than the apple trees in blossom
 In these late days o' the spring.

Here the robin redbreast's nesting,
 Here, from golden dawn till night,
 Honey bees are gaily swimming
 In a sea of pink and white.

Just a sea of fragrant blossoms,
 Steeped in sunshine, drenched in dew,
 Just a fragrant breath which tells you.
 Earth is fair again and new.

Just a breath of subtle sweetness,
 Breath which holds the spice o' youth,
 Holds the promise o' the summer—
 Holds the best o' things, forsooth.

There's no garden like an orchard,
 Nature shows no fairer thing
 Than the apple trees in blossom
 In these late days o' the spring.

OCTOBER.

WHO is it says May is the crown of the year?

Who is it says June is the gladdest?

Who is it says Autumn is withered and sere,

The gloomiest season and saddest?

You shut to your doors as I come with my train,

And heed not the challenge I'm flinging,

The ruddy leaf washed by the fresh falling rain,

The scarlet vine creeping and clinging!

Come out where I'm holding my court like a queen,

With canopy rare stretching over;

Come out where I revel in amber and green,

And soon I may call you my lover!

Come out to the hillside, come out to the vale,

Come out ere your mood turns to blaming,

Come out where my gold is, my red gold and pale,

Come out where my banners are flaming!

Come out where the bare furrows stretch in the glow,

Come out where the stubble fields glisten,

Where the wind it blows high, and the wind it blows
low,

And the lean grasses dance as they listen!

ST. ANDREW'S DAY—A TOAST.

WHA cares if skies be dull and gray?
 Wha heeds November weather?
 Let ilka Scot be glad to-day
 The whole wide warl' thegither.

We're a' a prood and stubborn lot,
 And clannish—sae fowk name us—
 Ay, but with sic guid cause none ought
 Tae judge us, or tae blame us,

For joys that are we'll pledge to-day
 A land baith fair and glowing—
 Here's tae the hames o' Canada,
 Wi' luv and peace o'erflowing!

For joys that were, for auld lang syne,
 For tender chords that bind us,
 A toast—your hand, auld friend, in mine—
 “The land we left behind us!”

Ho, lowlanders! Ho, hielandmen!

We'll toast her a' thegither,

Here's tae each bonnie loch and glen!

Here's tae her hills and heather!

Here's tae the auld hame far away!

While tender mists do blind us,

We'll pledge on this, St. Andrew's day,

“The land we left behind us!”

WHEN TREES ARE GREEN.

WOULD you be glad of heart and good?
Would you forget life's toil and care?
Come, lose yourself in this old wood
When May's soft touch is everywhere.

The hawthorn trees are white as snow,
The basswood flaunts its feathery sprays,
The willows kiss the stream below
And listen to its flatteries:

“ O willows supple, yellow, green,
Long have I flowed o'er stock and stone,
I say with truth I have not seen
A rarer beauty than your own!”

The rough-bark hickory, elm, and beech
With quick'ning thrill and growth are rife;
Oak, maple, through the heart of each
There runs a glorious tide of life.

Fresh leaves, young buds on every hand,
On trunk and limb a hint of red,
The gleam of poplars tall that stand
With God's own sunshine on their head.

The mandrake's silken parasol
Is fluttering in the breezes bold,
And yonder where the waters brawl
The buttercups show green and gold.

The slender grape-vine sways and weaves,
From sun-kissed sward and nook of gloom
There comes the smell of earth and leaves,
The breath of wild-flowers all abloom.

Spring's gleam is on the robin's breast,
Spring's joy is in the robin's song:
"My mate is in yon sheltered nest;
Ho! love is sweet and summer long!"

While full and jubilant and clear,
All the long day, from dawn till dark,
The trill of bobolink we hear,
Of hermit thrush and meadowlark.

Sit here among the grass and fern
Unmindful of the cares of life,
The lessons we have had to learn,
The hurts we've gotten in the strife.

There's youth in every breath we take,
Forgetfulness of loss and tears,
Within the heart there seems to wake
The gladness of the long past years.

Peace keeps us company to-day
In this old fragrant, shadowy wood;
We lift our eyes to heaven and say:
The world is fair and God is good.

O RADIANCE OF LIFE'S MORNING.

O RADIANCE of life's morning! O gold without alloy!
 O love that lives through all the years! O full, O
 perfect joy!

The hills of earth touch heaven, the heaven of blue
 and gold,
 And angel voices swell the song of love and peace
 untold!

O radiance of life's morning!
 The dew within the rose,
 The fragrance fresh from Eden
 That freights each breeze that blows!

Dear Christ, the wine of Cana pour out in rich supply,
 These hearts keep young with gladness while all the
 years go by!

O radiance of life's morning!
 O gold without alloy!
 O love that lives through all the years,
 O full, O perfect joy!

THE IDLER.

IF but one spark of honest zeal
 Flashes to life within his breast—
 A feeble, flick'ring spark at best;
 If for a moment he doth feel
 A dim desire to throw aside
 The bonds that idleness has wrought,
 To do, to be the man he ought,
 The tyrant thing he calls his pride—

The curse of all things good on earth—
 Takes on the cruel midwife's role,
 And each high impulse of the soul
 Is strangled in the hour of birth.
 "To dig I am ashamed," quoth he;
 "Mine is the pride of name and race
 That scorns to fill such humble space—
 Life's lowly tasks are not for me."

Oh, he can flatter with his tongue,
 Can toady to the rich and great,
 Can fawn on those he feels to hate,
 Until from out his nature's wrung
 Each shred of honesty and zeal,
 Each impulse independent, strong,
 Till truth and honor's but a song,
 And naught is beautiful or real.

THE TRUST.

WE steal the brawn, we steal the brain;
The man beneath us in the fight
Soon learns how helpless and how vain
To plead for justice or for right.
We steal the youth, we steal the health,
Hope, courage, aspiration high;
We steal men's all to make for wealth—
We will repent us by and by.

Meantime, a gift will heaven appease—
Great God, forgive our charities!

We steal the children's laughter shrill,
We steal their joys e'er they can taste,
“Why skip like young lambs on a hill?
Go, get ye to your task in haste.”
No matter that they droop and tire,
That heaven cries out against the sin,
The gold, red gold, that we desire
Their dimpled hands must help to win.

A cheque for missions, if you please—
Great God, forgive our charities!

We steal the light from lover's eyes,
We hush the tale he has to tell
Of pure desire, of tender ties—
No man can serve two masters well.
So loot his treasury of pride,
His holy hopes and visions steal,
His hearth-fire scatter far and wide,
And grind the sparks beneath your heel.

A cheque will cover sins like these—
Great God, forgive our charities!

WHEN PAGANINI PLAYS.

“DAWN!” laughs the bow, and we straight see
the sky,

Crimson, and golden, and gray,
See the rosy cloudlets go drifting by,
And the sheen on the lark as, soaring high,
He carols to greet the day.

Fast moves the bow o’er the wonderful strings—

We feel the joy in the air—
’Tis alive with the glory of growing things,
With wild honeysuckle that creeps and clings,
Rose of the briar bush—queen of the springs—
Anemones frail and fair!

We listen, and whisper with laughter low,
“It voices rare gladness, that ancient bow!”

Then, sad as the plaint of a child at night—

A child aweary with play—
The falling of shadows, a lost delight,
The moaning of watchers counting the flight
Of hours ’twixt the dark and day.

It echoes the cry of a broken heart,
 It grieves o'er a "might have been,"
It holds all the passionate tears that start
When our heaven and our earth drift far apart,
 And the way lies dark between.

It stills all our laughter, and whispers low—
'Tis heart-strings it plays on, that ancient bow!

TO-DAY YOU UNDERSTAND.

You lifted eyes pain-filled to me,
 Sad, questioning eyes that did demand
 Why I should thrust back, childishly,
 The friendship warm you offered me—
 Ah, sweet, to-day you understand!

'Twas that my heart beat rapturously
 At word of thine, at touch of hand,
 At tender glance vouchsafed to me
 The while I knew it must not be—
 Ah, sweet, to-day you understand!

There's neither pain nor mystery
 In that far-off and fragrant land
 To which you journeyed fearlessly;
 By gates of pearl and jasper sea—
 Ah, sweet, to-day you understand!

LOVE'S SACRIFICE.

“ AND behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head.”

THE eyes He turned on her who kneeling wept
 Were filled with tenderness and pity rare;
 But looking on the Pharisee, there crept
 A sorrow and a hint of sternness there.

“ Simon, I have somewhat to say to thee,”
 The Master's voice rang clearly out, and stirred,
 With its new note of full authority,
 The list'ning throng, who pressed to catch each
 word.

“ Master, say on,” self-righteous Simon said,
 And muttered in his beard, “ A sinner, she!”
 Marvelling the while that on the drooping head
 The hand of Jesus rested tenderly.

“ Seest thou this woman, Simon ? ” Scornful eyes
Did Simon bend upon the woman’s face,
The while the breath of love’s sweet sacrifice
Rose from the broken box and filled the place.

Self-righteousness, the slimy thing that grows
Upon a fellow-creature’s frailty,
That waxes fat on shame of ruined lives,
Swelled in the bosom of the Pharisee.

“ Into thine house I came at thy request,
Weary with travel, and thou gavest not
To me the service due the humblest guest,
No towel, no water clear and cold was brought

“ To wash my feet ; but she, whom you despise,
Out of the great affection she doth bear
Hath made a basin of her woman’s eyes,
A towel of her woman’s wealth of hair.

“ Thou gavest me no kiss ”—O Simon, shame,
Thus coldly and unlovingly to greet
The Prince of Peace !—“ but ever since I came
This woman hath not ceased to kiss my feet.

“ He loveth most who hath been most forgiven.”
O Simon, hearken, learn the great truth well,
No soul on faith’s glad wings mounts nearer heaven
Than that which hath been prisoned deep in hell.

Methinks I hear her say: "Thou who forgivest
My many sins, this off'ring, sweet of breath,
I pour on Thee, dear Lord, while yet thou liv'st,
For love is ever swift to outrun death."

Upon her are the eyes of Jesus turned,
With gaze which seems to strengthen and to bless.
Who knows how long the soul of Him hath yearned
For some such token of rare tenderness?

The flush of shame flaunts red on Simon's cheeks,
About the table idle babblings cease,
A deep, full silence, then the Master speaks:
"Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace—in
peace."

WHEN THE DUSK COMES DOWN.

Do you know what I will love best of all
 To do when I'm old? At the close of day
 When the dusk comes down and the shadows play,
 And the wind sings loud in the poplars tall,
 I will love to get into my corner here—
 The curtains drawn, and never a one
 To break the stillness—to sit here alone
 And dream of these good old times, my dear.

In fancy you'll come and sit by my side—
 I can see your face with my eyes close shut,
 With the pride and the softness clearly cut,
 The obstinate chin and the forehead wide,
 The oval cheek and the smile so warm,
 The dark eyes full of their fun and power,
 With the tender light for the tender hour,
 And the flash of fire that was half their charm.

I'll whisper: 'Twas sweet when youth was our
 own—
 The laughter, the nonsense, the freedom from
 care,
 The castles we built high up in the air,
 The secrets told to each other alone!
 Not all of laughter; the world went wrong,
 And the shadows pressed till my heart was sore.
 I'll never be glad, I said, any more,
 Never be happy, or gay, or strong.

O the sweetest thing in the hour of pain
Is to have one near us who understands,
To touch us gently and hold our hands,
Till our strength and courage come back again.
At love's swift pace you hurried to me—
Your tender words they will ring in my ears
When I sit and dream after long, long years—
The shine in your eyes through the mists I'll see.

Our lives will be lying so far apart,
And time, no doubt, will have given us much
Of weary wisdom; put many a touch
Of his withering hand on face and heart.
But I know what I will love best of all
To do at the end of the busy day,
When the dusk comes down and the shadows play,
And the wind sings low in the poplars tall.

I will love to get into my corner here,
With the curtains drawn, and never a one
To break the stillness—to sit here alone
And dream of these happy days, my dear,
And take my treasures from memory's hold—
The tears, the laughter, the songs that were
sung—
O the friends we love when the heart is young
Are the friends we love when the heart grows old!

THE GHOSTS AT NIGHT.

WHEN we were children, long ago,
And crept to bed at close of day,
With backward glance and footstep slow,
Though all aweary with our play,
Do you remember how the room—
The little room with window deep—
Would fill with shadows and with gloom,
And fright us so we could not sleep?

For O! the things we see at night—
The dragons grim, the goblins tall,
And, worst of all, the ghosts in white
That range themselves along the wall!
We could but cover up our head,
And listen to our heart's wild beat—
Such dreadful things about our bed,
And no protection save a sheet!
Then slept, and woke quite unafraid.
The sun was shining, and we found
Our shadows and our ghosts all laid,
Our world a glorious playing-ground.

For O! the things we see at night—
The dragons grim, the goblins tall,
And, worst of all, the ghosts in white
That range themselves along the wall!

We are but children still, the years
Have never taught us to be bold,
For mark our trembling and our fears
When sometimes, as in days of old,
We in the darkness lie awake,
And see come stealing to our side
A ghostly throng—the grave Mistake,
The Failure big, the broken Pride.

For O! the things we see at night—
The dragons grim, the goblins tall,
And, worst of all, the ghosts in white
That range themselves along the wall!

How close they creep! How big they loom!
The Task which waits, the Cares which
creep;
A child, affrighted in the gloom,
We fain would hide our head and weep.
When, lo! the coward fear is gone—
The golden sunshine fills the air,
And God has sent us with the dawn
The strength and will to do and dare.

For O! the things we see at night—
The dragons grim, the goblins tall,
And, worst of all, the ghosts in white
That range themselves along the wall!

THE LONG AGO.

O LIFE has its seasons joyous and drear,
Its summer sun and its winter snow,
But the fairest of all, I tell you, dear,
Was the sweet old spring of the long ago—
The ever and ever so long ago—

When we walked together among the flowers,
When the world with beauty was all aglow.
O the rain and dew! O the shine and showers
Of the sweet old spring of the long ago!
The ever and ever so long ago.

A hunger for all of the past delight
Is stirred by the winds that softly blow.
Can you spare me a thought from heaven
to-night
For the sweet old spring of the long ago?—
The ever and ever so long ago.

FORGIVE AND FORGET.

I'LL tell you the sweetest thing, dear heart,
I'll tell you the sweetest thing—
'Tis saying to one that we love: "Forgive
The careless words and the sting;
Forgive and forget, and be friends once more,
For the world is an empty place
Without the light of your warm, true eyes,
And the smile of your tender face."

O the kissing and making up again,
And the tender whispering!
I'll tell you the sweetest thing, dear heart,
I'll tell you the sweetest thing.

I'll tell you the saddest thing, dear heart,
I'll tell you the saddest thing:
'Tis coming to one that we love full well,
Some tender message to bring.

And loitering, loitering, by the way—

Held back by a foolish pride—

Till it's all too late to say "Forgive!"

When at length we reach her side.

For the ears are heavy and cannot hear,

And the chill lips cannot move

To whisper "Peace," though our hearts may
break

With longing, and pain, and love,

O this coming too late with our tenderness!

O the passionate tears that spring!

I'll tell you the saddest thing, dear heart,

I'll tell you the saddest thing!

Then let us make haste to be friends again,

Make haste to fold to our breast

The one we have hurt by word and deed,

Though we loved that one the best.

"Forgive and forget! Forgive and forget!"

O warm in the tear-wet eyes

Is the glow and the gleam of a golden light

From the shores of Paradise.

O the kissing and making up again,

And the tender whispering!

I'll tell you the sweetest thing, dear heart,

I'll tell you the sweetest thing.

THE ARGUMENT.

“ As friend,” she said, “ I will be kind,
My sympathy will rarely fail,
My eyes to many faults be blind—
As wife, I’ll lecture, scold, and rail,

“ Be full of moods, a shrew one day,
A thing of tenderness the next,
Will kiss and wound—a woman’s way
That long the soul of man has vexed.

“ You’ve been a true, unselfish man,
Have thought upon my good alway,
Been strong to shield, and wise to plan,
But ah! there is a change to-day.

“ There’s mastery in your ‘ Be my wife!’
For self stands up and eagerly
Claims all my love, and all my life,
The body and the soul of me.

“ Come, call me friend, and own me such,
Nor count it such a wondrous thing
To hold me close, thrill at my touch—
A lord and master!—there’s the sting.

“ ’Tis all or naught with you, you plead,
And he is blest who boldly wins;
These words,” she said, “ are proof, indeed,
That love and selfishness are twins.

“ Yet, had you let my wisdom sway,
Would it have pleased me, who can tell?
I might have said regretfully:
‘ Methinks I reasoned far too well!’ ”

THE SECRET.

THE throng about her did not know,
Her nearest friend could not surmise
Whence came the brightness and the glow,
The wondrous radiance of her eyes.

One said, half enviously: "Your face
Is beautiful with gladness rare,
With that warm, generous heart of yours
Some precious secret you must share."

Ah, true! beneath the filmy lace
That rose and fell upon her breast,
Her first love-token held its place—
From him, from him whom she loved
best!

VASHTI.

“ O LAST days of the year!” she whispered low,
“ You fly too swiftly past. Ah, you might stay
A while, a little while. Do you not know
What tender things you bear with you away?

“ I’m thinking, sitting in the soft gloom here,
Of all the riches that were mine the day
There crept down on the world the soft New Year,
A rosy thing with promise filled, and gay.

“ But twelve short months ago! a little space
In which to lose so much—a whole life’s wealth
Of love and faith, youth and youth’s tender grace—
Things that are wont to go from us by stealth.

“ Laughter and blushes, and the rapture strong,
The clasp of clinging hands, the ling’ring kiss,
The joy of living, and the glorious song
That drew its sweetness from a full heart’s bliss.

“ O wealth of tenderness! O gladness great!
That crowned me, covered me a year ago!
A bankrupt, I—gone faith, gone warm caress
Gone love, gone youth, gone all!”
She whispered low.

“ Oh, last days of the year, you take away
The riches that I held so close and dear.
Go not so swiftly, stay a little, stay
With one poor bankrupt,
Last days of the year.”

THE TREASURE BOX.

I ASKED Aunt Persis yester-eve, as twilight fell,
 If she had things of value hidden safe away—
 Treasures that were her very own? And did she love
 To bring them forth, and feast her eyes upon their
 worth,
 And finger them with all a miser's greed of touch?

She smiled that slow, warm smile of hers, and drew
 me down
 Beside her in the inglenook. The rain beat hard
 Against the panes, without the world was doubly gray
 With twilight and with cloud. The room was full of
 shade
 Till Persis stirred the slumbering grate fire wide
 awake,
 And made it send its flickering shafts of light into
 Each corner dim—gay shafts that chased the shadows
 forth

And took their place, then stole away and let
The shadow back, and then gave chase again,
The maddest and the stillest game!

To music of
The raindrops on the pane, and wind that softly
shrilled
About the eaves, the treasure box was opened wide
And its contents exposed to the rude gaze of one
Too young, too worldly-wise to know their value great.
I thought to see pearls, corals, quaint, old-fashioned
gems,
Or lace like gossamer creamed by the hand of time—
Real treasures worthy of the hoarding.

Lo! I saw
A leather-covered book, a worn and musty thing
With ragged leaves and many marks. “What is it?”
I asked;
“To me it looks the school-book that some stupid child
Has learned its lesson from.”
“And so it is,” she smiled. “My father’s testament,
And at his knee I conned the Golden Rule, and all
The wondrous truths that teach us how to live. ’Tis
dear
To me, you may suppose.”

A knot of ribbon that
Had once been blue, a braid of dark brown hair, a
spray

Of lily o' the valley, withered, sere, yet holding still
a breath

Of sweetness indescribable; some letters tied
With silk, a broken fan, some verses scribbled on
A yellow page, a baby's shoe, more letters, and,
What think you, friend? A string of amber beads,
without

A trace of value—beads of glass strung on a bit
Of twine. Aunt Persis took them in her hand and
let

The firelight play on them. "My grandmother's
first gift,"

She said, and slipped them round her neck. "I love
them best

Of all my ornaments—each amber bead holds fast
A joy caught in the childhood days of pleasantness,
And when I sit here with the sparkling things held
close

The joys they gathered long ago slip from them to
My heart, and ere I know, I am a child once more.

"Treasures! Nay, dear one, in your clear young eyes
I see

The disappointment grow—no treasures these, you
say;

These faded things, and poor, these musty, ragged
things—

But some day in the gloaming of your life you'll ope
Your treasure box, and find a hoard of just such
things

As these—a few rare trifles wrapped in memories.

THE MESSAGE.

MY Marjorie doth hold in her white hands
A spray of lilies plucked below the brook
Where the old ruin of a chapel stands—
A ruin tenanted by many a nook,
And all the grayness of it hid from sight
By gracious draping of the ivy green.
Sweet lilies, 'tis your glorious fate to-night
To lie upon her breast, to send between
Her silken bodice and the heart beneath
The fragrance given you by sun and shower.
Speak subtly with your warm, sweet-scented breath
Till, 'mid the dance and music of the hour,
She turn you love-filled eyes and glowing face,
With: "Ah, ye grew in that old trysting
place!"

ESTRANGED.

“It is good-bye,” she said; “the world is wide,
There’s space for you and me to walk apart.
Though we have walked together side by side,
My thoughts all yours, my resting-place your
heart,

We now will go our different ways. Forget
The happy past. I would not have you keep
One thought of me. Ah, yes, my eyes are wet;
My love is great, my grief must needs be deep.

“Yet I have strength to look at you, and say:
Forget it all, forget our souls were stirred,
Forget the sweetness of each dear, dead day,
The warm, impassioned kiss, the tender word,
The clinging handclasp, and the love-filled eyes—
Forget all these; but, when we walk apart
Remember this, though wilful and unwise,
No word of mine did ever hurt your heart.”

THE PARTING.

ONE summer's morning I heard a lark
 Singing to heaven, a sweet-throated bird;
 One winter's night I was glad in the dark
 Because of the wondrous song I had heard.

The joy of life, I have heard you say,
 Is my love, my laughter, my smiles and tears;
 When I have gone on the long, strange way,
 Let these stay with you through all the years—

These be the lark's song. What is love worth
 That cannot crowd, in the time that's given
 To two like us on this gray old earth,
 Such bliss as will last till we reach heaven?

Dear one, think oft of the full, glad years,
 And, thinking of them, forget to weep.
 Whisper: "Remembrance holds no tears!"
 And kiss my mouth when I fall on sleep.

MARGARET.

HER eyes—upon a summer's day
God's skies are not more blue than they.

Her hair—you've seen a sunbeam bold
Made up of just such threads of gold.

Her cheek—the leaf which nearest grows
The dewy heart of June's red rose.

Her mouth—full lipped, and subtly sweet
As briar drowned in summer heat.

Her heart—December's chill and snow—
Heaven pity me, who love her so!

ST. VALENTINE.

THE girl's a slender thing and fair,
With dimpled cheek and eyes ashine;
The youth is tall, with bashful air.
Heigho! a fond and foolish pair—
The day is yours, St. Valentine.

He says: " My heart will constant prove,
Since every beat of it is thine;
The sweetest joy of life is love."
The birds are mating in the grove—
The day is yours, St. Valentine.

What matter that the wind blows chill
Through leafless tree and naked vine,
That snowdrifts linger on the hill,
When warm love makes the pulses thrill?
The day is yours, St. Valentine.

TWO JUNE NIGHTS.

A RED rose in my lady's hair,
 A white rose in her fingers,
 A wild bird singing low, somewhere,
 A song that pulses, lingers.
 The sound of dancing and of mirth,
 The fiddle's merry chiming,
 A smell of earth, of fresh, warm earth,
 And honeysuckle climbing;
 My lady near, yet far away—
 Ah, lonely June of yesterday!

A big white night of velvet sky,
 And Milky Way a-gleaming,
 The fragrant blue smoke drifting by
 From camp-fire brightly beaming;
 The stillness of the Northland far—
 God's solitudes of splendor—
 My road a trail, my chart a star.
 Wind, 'mong the balsams slender,
 Sing low: O glad June of to-day,
 My lady's near, though far away!

REMEMBRANCE.

“ ONCE they were lovers,” says the world, “ with
young hearts all aglow;

They have forgotten,” says the world, “ forgotten
long ago.”

Between ourselves—just whisper it—the old world
does not know.

They walk their lone, divided ways, but ever with
them goes

Remembrance, the subtle breath of love’s sweet
thorny rose.

THE EMIGRANT LADDIE.

THOUGH long, long leagues of land and sea
Stretch out between Braemar and me,

I'll win home late or soon,
Will take the old familiar way
Past Isla Glen, up bold Glenshee,
By sun-kissed hill and valley gray—
These feet of mine will find their way
At midnight or at noon.

The hearth-fire, and the cot of stone
Set 'mong the fir trees tall and lone,

I'll see before my eyes;
Hear rough winds kiss the heath-clad hill,
The murmur gay of loch and rill,
The mavis singing sweet and shrill,
Hear, warm and soft as notes that thrill
The souls in paradise.

A voice all tremulous and glad
Cries out: "A welcome home, my lad!"

LOVE'S SERVICE.

YOUR presence is a psalm of praise,
 And as its measure grandly rings
 God's finger finds my heart and plays
 A *te deum* upon its strings.
 I never see you but I feel
 That I in gratitude must kneel.

Your head down-bent, the brow of snow
 Crowned with the shining braids of hair,
 To me, because I love you so,
 Is in itself a tender prayer,
 All faith, all meekness, and all trust—
 "Amen!" I cry, because I must.

Your clear eyes hold the text apart,
 And shame my love of place and pelf
 With, "Love the Lord with all thine heart,
 And love thy neighbor as thyself!"
 Dear eyes and true,—I sorely need
 More knowledge of your gracious creed.

About your lips the summer lies—

Who runs may read each subtle lure
To draw me nearer to the skies,

And make me strong, and keep me pure.
I loathe my worldliness and guile
Each time your red lips on me smile.

The benediction of your face—

Your lifted face—doth make a road
For white-robed peace and golden grace

To reach my heart and take its load.
Dear woman saint, I bow the knee,
And give God thanks for love and thee!

APRIL.

God's garden is this dim old wood,
And hidden in its bosom
The bursting bud, the feathery leaf
And soft, sweet smelling blossom.

Ho! May is fair, and glorious June
In rose leaves doth enfold her;
Their bloom is richer than my own,
But mine is sweeter, bolder.

God's garden is this dim old wood,
And I, the pretty vagrant,
I am the gardener He sends
To make it fair and fragrant.

IN MEMORIAM.

(A Tribute to Mrs. George A. Cox.

THE Golden Rule—the blessed creed
 That shelters frail humanity,
 The tender thought for those in need,
 The charity of word and deed,
 Without which all is vanity—

This, friend, you made your very own,
 And yours the satisfying part
 To pluck the rose of love full blown,
 To reap the gladness you had sown
 With open hand and kindly heart.

Simplicity, the jewel rare,
 Whose gleam is ever true and warm—
 That thing of worth beyond compare
 Which none but truly great may wear—
 Adorned your life with power and charm.

Yours the sincerity that grips
Fast hold of natures strong and wise;
It thrilled you to your finger-tips,
It set its seal on brow and lips,
And shone within your dark, true eyes.

The throng knew not how rich the store
Of sympathy and trust you had;
Knew not you were, till life was o'er,
God's almoner among His poor,
God's comforter to sick and sad.

Too soon you went—we miss the cheer,
The kindness vouchsafed to all;
The world seems strangely lone and drear
When one whom many hearts hold dear
Fares heavenward ere the shadows fall.

Too soon you went, and yet, maybe,
Your work well done, your task complete,
The soul of you turned longingly
Toward gates of pearl and jasper sea
And fields of Eden rarely sweet.

